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PEEPS AT HISTORY

HOLLAND

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DEATHS OF WILLIAM THE SILENT PAGE



PEEPS AT HISTORY

HOLLAND

BY
JOHN FINNEMORE

CONTAINING EIGHT FULL-PAGE
ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR FROM DRAWINGS
BY ALLAN STEWART AND MIMA NIXON
AND MANY LINE DRAWINGS IN THE TEXT

LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK

1912

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. EARLY TIMES - - - - -	I
II. THE GROWTH OF TOWNS - - - - -	5
III. THE HOUSE OF BURGUNDY - - - - -	10
IV. THE SPANISH RULERS - - - - -	15
V. THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC—I - - - - -	21
VI. THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC—II - - - - -	27
VII. THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC—III - - - - -	34
VIII. THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC—IV - - - - -	39
IX. THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC—V - - - - -	46
X. THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC—VI - - - - -	53
XI. PRINCE MAURICE - - - - -	58
XII. THE GREATNESS OF HOLLAND - - - - -	63
XIII. A RELIGIOUS QUARREL AND A RENEWED WAR - - - - -	69
XIV. THE DUTCH WARS WITH ENGLAND - - - - -	74
XV. THE DECLINE OF HOLLAND - - - - -	80
XVI. RECENT TIMES - - - - -	85

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

IN COLOUR

DEATH OF WILLIAM THE SILENT - - - - *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

THE CAMP AND TREASURE OF CHARLES THE BOLD IN

THE HANDS OF THE SWISS - - - - 17

THE INQUISITION - - - - 24

“LONG LIVE THE BEGGARS !” - - - - 33

THE RELIEF OF LEYDEN - - - - 40

A DUTCH BULB FARM OF TO-DAY - - - - 73

PETER THE GREAT WORKING AS A SHIPWRIGHT IN

ZAANDAM - - - - 80

NOT THE ESTATES, BUT YOU, YOU, YOU ! *On the cover*

*Also Twenty-six Small Black and White Line Illustrations
in the Text.*

HOLLAND

CHAPTER I

EARLY TIMES

THE Rhine, that great and most famous river of Western Europe, rushes down from the mountains of Switzerland, flows in a long course through a lovely valley, and, as it approaches its mouth, checks its rapid stream, breaks into many sluggish waterways, and meanders across a wide flat into the North Sea. This flat has been formed by the great river itself. For many ages the swift stream has brought down masses of soil from its upper course. When the flow of the river is checked, this soil is thrown down, and has helped to build a new land. This new land was first a wild morass with muddy islands covered by thick forests. In times of furious storm the sea swept far over it, and the land was deeply flooded. But for many centuries man has been at work, building walls and banks to keep the sea out, and the rivers in their proper places. He has drained and enclosed and protected, until this muddy delta has become firm soil and the home of a nation, the Dutch, living in their homeland of Holland.

We hear first of this country from Julius Cæsar. When that great soldier was conquering fresh lands to add to the Roman Empire, he came to the mouth of the

Holland

Rhine, where two large arms of the river enclosed an island. This island was called Batavia, and its people the Batavians. The latter were a Teutonic tribe, famous for their love of war and their valour in battle. All the German tribes were brave, but these were the bravest. They were hardy of body, firm of mind, and of unconquerable spirit. No youth of the tribe was allowed to cut his hair or his beard until he had slain an enemy in battle. In his first fight, when he had performed this feat, he hastened to bare his face and cut short his flowing locks, even in the midst of the wild combat. He longed to rid himself of the marks which must ever be borne by the coward and the sluggard. He also wore upon his neck an iron ring until he had slain his man, and this he cast away joyfully now that he was free of the ranks of the warriors.



A Standard-Bearer of the
German Legion.

The Romans made friends of these mighty fighting-men. They formed a Batavian legion, and the Batavians, both horse and foot, fought splendidly in the Roman armies and became favourite and trusted troops. Beyond the Batavians, to the north, dwelt the tribe of the Frisians, of the same blood as the Saxons who settled in England, and speaking a language so closely akin that whole sentences of the one tongue are the same as the other. Thus a well-known couplet runs :

“Good butter and good cheese
Is good English and good Fries.”

The Frisians were famous for their love of freedom.

Early Times

The Frisian laws declare that the people shall be free as long as the winds blow out of the clouds and the earth shall stand. From these two brave and freedom-loving tribes have the people of Holland sprung, and we shall see that they gave splendid proof that they came of such noble forefathers.

For hundreds of years the Batavians sent their best and bravest to fill the ranks of Roman armies, and the Frisians dwelt in Friesland, and were pagans, staunch to the faith of Woden and Thor. Then came the great tribe of the Franks, seizing large portions of the land which Rome was now too weak to hold, and trying to master, among other peoples, the "free Frisians." For a long time the Frisians resisted their armies and remained the great northern outpost of paganism, until they were attacked by the famous Frankish warrior Charles Martel, Charles the Hammer, who overthrew them with terrible slaughter in A.D. 750, and forced them to become Christians. Missionaries from Britain had a large share in their conversion. The Anglo-Saxon monk Willibrod went through the land, destroying the images of Woden and founding churches. He became Bishop of all the Frisians.

Batavians and Frisians both came under the rule of the mighty Frankish King Charlemagne, Charles the Great, who left them their native laws and customs, and only called upon them to obey the chiefs whom he set over them. They were ruled by the House of Charlemagne until it ended with Charles the Simple, and this King in A.D. 922 created a Count Dirk, and gave him the territory of Holland to hold. But Dirk did not rule over the whole of that land which we call Holland to-day, for the Bishop of Utrecht was of great power and authority. In those days, we must remember,

Holland

a Bishop was often not only a priest, but also a great lord who held wide lands, had bands of soldiers in his pay, and sometimes rode to battle with a cassock over his armour, and a mace at his saddle-bow, with which to dash out the brains of his enemies.

For centuries, then, Holland was ruled by the Counts of Holland and the Bishops of Utrecht. There was often bitter enmity between these two potentates, and this strife extended to their followers. There were desperate battles between Count and Bishop, between lord and lord, and sometimes between town and town. The people suffered greatly in these struggles. Houses were destroyed, fields laid desolate, and those captured in war became slaves. The slave had no rights at all ; the freeman was little better off. The latter was called upon to pay heavy taxes, while the nobles and the clergy paid none. He had nothing to say in the spending of this money he had contributed. He had no redress at law for violence offered to him by a man of higher rank.

For nearly four hundred years the sons of Dirk ruled as Counts of Holland in an unbroken line. Then the family died out, and the countship fell to the House of Hainault. Fifty years later this line expired, in 1355. Now there broke out a kind of civil war in which the country was split into two parties—the Hooks and the Kabblejaws. Kabblejaw means Codfish—so one was the Codfish party, and the other the Hooks, meaning fish-hooks with which they would tear their enemies, the Kabblejaws. It is not easy to find what was the reason of this fierce quarrel, but, roughly speaking, it may be said that the Kabblejaws were the townsmen who opposed the nobles, the latter being the Hooks. For close upon a hundred and fifty years the country was troubled by these savage broils.

The Growth of Towns

CHAPTER II

THE GROWTH OF TOWNS

IN the wild, unsettled days of these early centuries, the only safe place for men to build their homes was under the shadow of the castle of some powerful noble. In this way the early towns grew up. First a cluster of huts is found outside the castle gates, and in these live the retainers and servants of the "land's master," as the lord of the district was called. To this harbour of safety come artisans and traders to practise their crafts or offer their merchandise under the protection of the noble, and they pay him dues for this protection.

Little by little, as the craftsmen and merchants gain wealth, they build better and stronger houses, and the village becomes a town. The noble soon perceives that it is much better for him to protect these wealthy citizens than to harry and plunder them, as in former days. He can only rob them once ; but if he leaves them in peace to follow their own business, his yearly dues grow in amount and are a never-ending source of income. So he maintains friendship with the worthy townsmen, and grants them privilege after privilege, but takes care all the time that they shall pay down a handsome sum for every one.

The townsmen pay gladly, for they are securing their liberties, the right to buy and sell and practise their crafts in peace, and peace is all in all to them. They obtain the right to rule themselves, to introduce law instead of force, to build strong walls to guard their homes from robbers and foes, and they pay for each step as they go, like honest traders. At last they obtain

Holland

a charter, and now the town is full-fledged, and to a large degree master of its own fortunes.

The charter is an agreement between the town and its overlord as to the rights which the town shall enjoy, and the sums which the town shall pay to its overlord for the liberties granted. In the main, the central point of every charter is that the town shall come under the domain of *law*, and shall no more be subject to the rude violence of an age when every noble was a robber, and believed with all his heart that "might was right."

The oldest charter of Holland was granted to the town of Middelburg in A.D. 1217. It was given to the town by Count William I. of Holland and Countess Joanna of Flanders, for both these rulers had rights over the place. This charter is of deep interest, as the model upon which many others were formed and granted to towns which afterwards became great cities. The Schepens spoken of are the magistrates. At first these were appointed by the overlord, but in time they were elected by the townsmen themselves, who chose the best known and most respected of the citizens.

The charter says that the inhabitants are taken into protection by both Counts. Upon fighting, maiming, wounding, striking, scolding; upon peace-breaking; upon resistance to peace-makers and to the judgment of Schepens; upon selling spoiled wine and other misdeeds, fines are imposed for behoof of the Count, the city, and sometimes of the Schepens. To all kinds of Middelburgers one kind of law is guaranteed. Every man must go before the Schepens. If anyone being summoned and present in the district does not appear, or refuses to obey the sentence, he shall be banished, and all his property shall be taken from him.

Any Schepen who denies justice to a complainant shall

The Growth of Towns

not be allowed to hold another court until he has made good his fault. A townsman who has a dispute with an outsider must summon him before the Schepens. If any man is not satisfied with the judgment of the Schepens, he may appeal to the Count. No one can testify but a householder. If an outsider has a complaint against a townsman, the Schepens and Schout (chief magistrate) must arrange it. If either party will not obey their sentence, they must ring the town bell and summon an assembly of townsmen to compel him. Anyone ringing the town bell, except by general consent, and anyone not appearing when it tolls, are liable to a fine. No Middelburger can be arrested or held in prison within Flanders or Holland (the dominions of the Counts) except for crime.

Such charters as this formed the basis of the liberty of our old English towns as well as of Dutch cities, and their Schout and Schepens were just the same as our Mayor and Aldermen. There was nothing new in these rights which the charters granted. It was really a return to old customs, to the old forms of justice practised in the early Germanic tribes, from which both Dutch and English spring. But in face of the lawless doings in the centuries before the charters were granted, these rights were very valuable indeed.

Under these charters the cities of Holland grew fast in wealth, and with wealth came power. The freeman became a burgher, the burgher a rich merchant who built himself a stately house, wore furs and rich robes, and decked himself with chains of gold, as master of a guild. In each town the craftsmen were divided into guilds, there being a guild of each trade. And, as time went on, the town often became far more powerful than its overlord, freed itself from his authority, and was, in

Holland

short, a little republic, ruling its own citizens and making its own laws.

The swift gathering of great wealth in these cities of the Netherlands, or Low Countries, as Holland and Flanders were often called, arose from several causes. One effect of the Crusades had been to cause a great increase of commerce with the East. The spices, silks, jewels and other goods from the East were brought into the great ports of Venice and Genoa. Thence they were carried over the passes of the Alps to the Rhine, and packed in barges and boats. These floated down the great river to its mouth, and from the Netherland towns the wealth of the East was distributed over Western Europe. Then there was the trade with the Hanse Towns. A number of towns on the shores of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and the Baltic coast joined together to trade and to defend each other from pirates and enemies. They formed the Hanseatic League, and were called the Hanse Towns. The League became a great power in Northern Europe. It had armies and fleets of its own. It often laid down the law to Kings, and the chief traders of its towns were merchant-princes. The Hanse merchants dealt, in the main, in raw materials. Into their storehouses flowed the products of the farmers, miners, hunters, and fishermen, who lived in the lands round the Baltic.

They gathered vast stores of hemp and flax, of furs and hides, of metals and dried fish. Among their best customers were the busy craftsmen of the Netherlands. These workers wove and spun, made hides into leather, and cut and stitched the latter into all kinds of goods, used furs to adorn robes of state, worked iron into armour and weapons as well as articles for household use, fashioned gold and silver into ornaments and

The Growth of Towns

decorations, and every town was a busy hive of human industry, where men prospered and wealth grew apace.

Finally there was the wool trade with England, and this was of the first importance. The weaving of cloth was one of the chief industries of the Netherlands, and it was to England that the merchants looked for a regular supply of wool. The steady flow of wool bales from England proves that our country in those days enjoyed greater peace than the people of the Continent. The shepherd and his sheep are open above all others to risk in a violent and unsettled country. The flock roaming abroad in search of food, or folded in the open field, is at the mercy of a band of marauders. The peace was better kept in England, so she had plenty of wool to sell, and the weavers of the Low Countries were glad to buy it, for it was of good quality. For hundreds of years this trade between England and the Low Countries existed, and was a matter of the utmost importance to both parties.

After the towns had gained control of their own affairs, they began to take a part in the government of the nation. The ruling body of a province was called the Assembly of the Estates.

To this Assembly came nobles and burghers, who acted on behalf of the cities who sent them. In Holland the clergy never had a place in these national councils. Nor had the burghers power to agree to a measure unless the city from which they came was in favour of it: if it was a new measure the burgher waited for the opinion of his town, and then voted as his fellow-citizens decided. At the head of the Assembly was a president, who was called the Stadtholder; he represented the ruler of the country.

In these Assemblies there was to be seen, from the

Holland

first, a weakness which led to most evil results. The burghers did not form a united body. Each man was only a delegate from his city. Each city was a little State which kept its own affairs in its own hands, and looked with suspicion, not only on its natural enemies—the Sovereign and the nobles—but also upon its sister cities. Where union would have meant vast strength, the cities of Holland threw away the band which should have joined them. Thus a tyrant on the throne had but one city at a time to deal with, and he could easily crush in turn a number of towns whose united forces would have compelled him to pause in his career.

CHAPTER III

THE HOUSE OF BURGUNDY

IN the midst of the strife of the Hooks and Kabblejaws the rule of the Netherlands fell to a maiden of seventeen, the beautiful but unhappy Jacqueline. To this day she is remembered in story and ballad and drama among the people over whom she once ruled. She was fair and good and kind, but her life was a whole series of miseries and misfortunes, for she had powerful kinsmen who coveted her broad lands and rich cities. After thirteen years of conflict she died, despairing and broken-hearted, and her cousin, Philip, Duke of Burgundy, took possession of her heritage.

Philip, Duke of Burgundy, was one of those Princes of Europe who were often richer and more powerful than the Kings who were, in name, their masters. The Dukes of Burgundy were the vassals of the King of France, but when a Duke ruled over a large part of France and the whole of the Netherlands, he was a much

The House of Burgundy

more powerful man than his lord. In such a position stood Philip of Burgundy when he became master of the Netherlands in 1437. He was known as Philip the Good, but the name must have been given in flattery, for he was a bad man and his deeds were evil.

At the moment when the Netherlands came into the hands of Philip, the country was at its fullest tide of prosperity, and the cities were at their height of power and freedom. Philip wished to limit these liberties, and he did so at one bold stroke. He announced that he did not intend to be bound by any pledges or promises given before he came to power, that all charters were to be null and void unless he gave his assent to them now that he was Count of Holland. In this way he made himself completely master of the liberties of the country, and he allowed his subjects no more freedom than he wished.

But for a time the Netherlands did not feel the chains which were afterwards to gall them so bitterly. They were so busy in city and hamlet and field, on the shore and on the sea, that they had scarce any thought save of their daily business and the wealth which flowed in an ever-deepening stream into their coffers. We have spoken of the industries of the artisans; the toil of the fishermen was of no less importance. The men of Holland took to the sea as ducks take to water. To their land it was an enemy which they fought with never-ceasing vigilance; to themselves it was a treasure-house whence their great fishing fleets took out enormous stores of wealth. Much of this wealth was owing to the fact



Spanish Man-at-Arms
—Fifteenth Century.

Holland

that the Dutch fishermen had discovered an excellent way of curing herrings. It is said that the method was discovered by a fisherman named Beukelzoon, who lived at Biervliet in Zeeland; he died in 1447.

Now, to-day we can hardly form any idea of the vast importance of well-cured fish to our forefathers.

Six hundred years ago very little fresh meat was eaten in the winter. Root crops for winter feeding were unknown, and spare cattle were killed in autumn as soon as grass began to run short, and the meat salted down for the winter. To give variety to food, salted fish was in great demand. Again, at various times of the year the Church commanded that no flesh should be eaten, but fish was allowed. In places far from the sea fresh fish could not be obtained, and salted fish was bought. Thus the demand for cured fish was great and constant; and when it was discovered that the salted fish of Holland would keep better than any other, there grew up a huge trade in it. The fishing fleets, too, became the nursery of brave seamen.

"Then came into existence that race of cool and daring mariners who, in after-

times, were to make the Dutch name illustrious throughout the world—the men whose fierce descendants, the 'Beggars of the Sea,' were to make the Spanish Empire tremble—the men whose later successors swept the seas with brooms at the masthead, and whose ocean battles with their equally fearless English brethren often lasted four uninterrupted days and nights."



Flemish Merchant—
Fifteenth Century.

The House of Burgundy

Philip ruled the Netherlands until 1467, when he died, and his son, Charles the Bold, stepped into his place. Never did Prince receive a better name. Charles



Charles the Bold.

was bold and headstrong, and nothing else. He had neither sense nor prudence. He would fight anyone at any time, and charged upon his enemies with all the ferocity of a wild-boar. But of the powers which a wise and just Prince should possess he showed not a trace. He plunged into war after war, and forced the Netherlands to find the money to pay for them. His father had checked the liberties of the great

towns ; Charles destroyed them. He kept a powerful standing army, and was ready at once to march upon any town which showed the smallest sign of opposing his will. He put aside the magistrates of a city, sent his own people to take their place, and exacted taxes without gaining the consent of the burghers. He took away charters, and only granted new ones on receiving a large payment. In short, he ruled the Low Countries of Holland and Flanders like a despot.

In 1474 Charles quarrelled with the Swiss, and two years later he led a powerful army to conquer the mountaineers. He looked upon the peasants of the hills with the utmost contempt, and did not dream that they would stand for a moment before his splendid array of knights and men-at-arms. But at Granson, in 1476, the sturdy Swiss drove the army of Burgundy before them in utter rout. Charles was swept away in the tide of flight, and his camp and treasure fell into the hands of the enemy. The simple, hardy peasants were full of wonder over the treasure which came into their

Holland

grasp. They took the vessels of gold and silver for copper and tin. They thought the diamonds and jewels were pieces of coloured glass, and sold them for small sums.

The wild and headstrong Duke, full of rage at this defeat by men whom he had despised, gathered his troops and offered battle once more near Berne. Again he was overthrown with terrible slaughter. Charles had to fly at full speed to save his own life, and galloped many a mile ere he drew rein. He was now like a madman. He, one of the foremost men of Europe, had been twice beaten by a crowd of peasants. His ferocious temper drove him forward to a third attempt to battle with the Swiss, and it proved his last fight. He laid siege to the town of Nancy, and the Swiss marched to relieve it. On January 5, 1477, there was a battle, and the Swiss drove the Burgundians before them. Charles fell, but no one knows how. Two days later his body was found amid a heap of slain, his face frozen into a pool of blood and water. He had been stripped by the plunderers who haunt a battlefield, and there he lay, dead, naked, deserted, he who had been lord of so many provinces, duchies, and earldoms. And all these possessions passed to the rule of his daughter, Lady Mary.

But not all of them were allowed to stay under her rule. The Kings of France had been jealous of their powerful vassals, the Dukes of Burgundy, and now Louis XI. of France, Louis the Crafty, took the opportunity of stripping the Lady Mary of her French provinces. But her subjects in the Netherlands stood by her, and she still held the Low Countries. The Netherlands did not so much love Mary of Burgundy as they feared Louis of France. They hoped to regain their lost liberties from Mary. They dreaded

The Spanish Rulers

Louis the Crafty ; they knew he would prove a more terrible master than even Charles the Bold had been.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPANISH RULERS

THE Netherlanders at once made a bold effort to win back their lost liberties. They said that they were willing to find money for the Lady Mary, but she must grant them freedom. They won. The Duchess signed a famous deed called the "Great Privilege." This was the Magna Charta of Holland. Like our own great body of laws, it was often broken, often set at naught by tyrants, but the people clung to it, fought for it, and it was ever the cornerstone of Dutch freedom. The "Great Privilege" declared that the Duchess should not marry without the consent of her people ; that all offices in her gift should be held by natives of the land ; that the Great Council and Supreme Court of Holland should be set up again, and be a court of appeal from all lower courts ; that the cities and provinces should hold Diets when they chose ; that no new taxes should be imposed without the consent of the people ; that no war should be undertaken against the will of the people ; that the language of the people should be employed in all public and legal documents ; that the seat of government should be at the Hague ; that no money should be coined, or its value altered, except by consent of the Estates ; that the Sovereign should come in person to the Estates to ask for supplies ; that no citizen should suffer imprisonment except after fair trial.

These were the chief provisions of this famous grant,

Holland

and it was soon seen that the Netherlanders were resolved to uphold their rights, and woe betide anyone who dared to tamper with the "Great Privilege." In a short time it was discovered that two of Mary's counsellors were in treaty with the King of France, in defiance of the rights of the burghers under the great charter. They were seized in Ghent, and the angry citizens at once brought them to trial. They were condemned to death. The Duchess Mary did all she could to save her servants. Clad in mourning garments, her hair loose and streaming, her face bathed in tears, she went on foot to the town-house and to the market-place, and begged the citizens to spare her counsellors. Her tears and entreaties were all in vain. The counsellors were beheaded upon the spot. There

was no mercy for the men who had raised their hands against the "Great Privilege."

Mary married Maximilian of Hapsburg, son of the Emperor of Germany. Five years after the marriage Mary died from an accident ; she fell from her horse. She left a son, Philip, four years old, so that the rule of the Netherlands now passed from the House of Burgundy to the House of Hapsburg. Philip, in 1496, married Joanna, daughter of the famous Spanish Sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella. In 1500 a son was born to

Philip and Joanna, who was named Charles, and was to become one of the most powerful monarchs that Europe has ever known. This was the great Charles V., who at nineteen years of age had gathered into his



Emperor Charles V.



THE CAMP AND THE ASHES OF CHARLES THE BOLD
IN THE HANDS OF THE SWISS
PAGE 14

The Spanish Rulers

hands the reins of authority over many lands. From his mother he inherited Spain and the dominion over the New World in America. From his father he inherited the Netherlands. Upon the death of his grandfather Maximilian, he became Emperor of Germany, for Philip was already dead. Thus he was King of Spain, Emperor of Germany, King of Jerusalem, Duke of the Netherlands, and, by grant of the Pope, Lord of the New World.

Of these vast possessions the Low Countries only formed a small corner, but it was by far the richest corner. It was the part of his dominions to which Charles looked for never-failing supplies of money to carry on his wars and expeditions. About this time it seemed likely that the prosperity of the Netherlands would shrink, owing to the loss of its trade with the East. This was caused by the rise of the Turkish power in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Turks had made a conquest of Egypt by the year 1520, and it was through Egypt that the trade route to India and the East ran. The Turks destroyed trade and manufacture, and checked the stream of commerce. The latter was compelled to change its direction and flow round the Cape of Good Hope. This brought poverty and decay on cities of Italy and towns of Germany. Some towns of the Netherlands suffered also, but the country as a whole was saved by its weavers and fishermen. Those



Sixteenth-Century Armour.

Holland

industries flourished apace, and filled the coffers which the loss of Eastern trade had emptied.

But the greatest feature of the reign of Charles V. was the spread of the Reformation. Long before Luther thundered against the Pope, the Netherlanders had fought many a bitter quarrel with the Church of Rome. With the invention of printing, vast numbers began to read the Bible, for the book which had cost fifty crowns before, now cost but five. They found that the Pope and his followers had but little resemblance to the Apostles whom they professed to represent, and they were swift to embrace the opinions of the Reformers, Luther and Calvin. In the Netherlands the people followed the teachings of John Calvin rather than those of Luther. There was much difference between these teachings. Luther denied the authority of the Pope, but did not deny that of the King. Calvin denied not only the Divine right of the Pope, but the Divine right of a King also. Thus it was easy for a ruler to be a good Lutheran, but it was hardly likely he would be a good Calvinist. Calvin's teaching leaned towards a republic rather than towards a monarchy.

Charles V. saw this, and was not slow to attack the Reformers in the Netherlands. The persecution of those who would not follow King and Pope in their religion was bitter and constant. In no part of Europe were so many persons put to death for their religious opinions as in the Netherlands. It was the hand of Charles which planted the Inquisition in these flourishing provinces, and placed the believers in the Reformed religion in the hands of the torturer and the executioner. The number of his victims was incredible. Upon good authority it was stated that one hundred thousand Netherlanders were burned, strangled, beheaded, or

The Spanish Rulers

buried alive, by his orders. The Venetian Ambassador placed the number of victims in Holland and Friesland alone at thirty thousand, and this estimate was made in 1546, ten years before Charles left the throne.

Charles gave up his power before he died. In 1555 he resigned his possessions to his son, and retired to a monastery to end his days in quietness. There was a famous scene in the great hall of the Palace of Brussels on October 25, 1555. A brilliant assembly of great nobles had gathered to see their King and Emperor give up his crowns to his son, Philip. Charles came in leaning upon the arm of a young man, twenty-two years of age. This was William, Prince of Orange, he who was to be ever famous, not only in Dutch history, but in the history of mankind—the wisest, the bravest, the noblest of patriots, William the Silent, the father of Dutch freedom.

Philip was there to receive his father's domains. He became Philip II. He was then a young man twenty-eight years old, small, thin, mean-looking, with a cold face and a haughty bearing. He had the greatest opinion of his own power and importance, and there was all the pride of a tyrant in that insignificant form. But little did he dream that his power would break in ruin before that quiet, handsome young man upon whose arm his father leaned; that in a short time a terrible struggle would burst out, in which he and William of Orange would face each other as leaders, and that all the might of Spain would be foiled by the cool, dauntless resolution of William the Silent.



Philip II.

No such thing was in any mind that day. William

Holland

of Orange became the dutiful subject of Philip II., as he had been the subject of Charles V.; and the people of the Netherlands received their new ruler with great joy. Never were rejoicings more ill-timed. Philip had come to the throne with two settled ideas in his mind. One was the resolve to rule the Netherlands at his own will; the other, to root out the Reformed religion. At that day it was a common belief among rulers that their subjects ought to hold those views in religion which they held themselves, and this belief was strongly planted in the narrow, obstinate mind of Philip II. He was a most rigid Roman Catholic, and he was bent on crushing out all other forms of religious thought. To send a heretic to the stake or to the scaffold was to him both a duty and a pleasure, and he slew and slew without sparing.

He remained four years in the Netherlands, and then returned to Spain in 1559. He never saw the Low Countries again. When he was leaving the country, the Estates asked him to remove the foreign troops he had placed in the land. They pointed out that there was peace in the realm, and that the Spanish army in their midst was not needed to protect the country. Philip was very angry at this, for he relied on his standing army of Spanish troops to carry out his designs, and was not willing to remove it. A striking scene took place as Philip was about to board the ship on which he returned to Spain. William of Orange was among the nobles who had gathered to see the King depart, and Philip spoke bitterly to William, saying that he believed that William was at the bottom of this movement to get rid of the Spanish troops. William replied quietly that the action of the Estates had been quite simple and natural. Upon this the King, boiling with

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

rage, seized the Prince by the wrist and shook it fiercely, crying out in Spanish, "Not the Estates, but you, you, you!" using the most insulting form of words the Spanish tongue would permit. It was a strange and prophetic scene; Philip seemed to divine that this man would be the most terrible enemy he would ever encounter. The King now sailed away to Spain, leaving his sister Margaret to rule the Netherlands as Regent.

CHAPTER V

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC—I

MARGARET was helped in her government by a number of counsellors, among whom was William the Silent, Prince of Orange. He was also Stadtholder for Holland—that is, the King's representative there. William's title was taken from the town of Orange in the South of France, but his life was spent in the Netherlands, and it was there that his great work as a champion of freedom was done.



William the Silent.

He won his famous name as William the Silent in this way: In the year 1559 a treaty was made between Philip and the King of France. Philip gave four of his nobles to the French King as hostages to be held in France until the terms of the treaty had been carried out. Among these hostages was William of Orange. One day the King of France went out hunting, and William went with him. As they were riding through a forest, the King, thinking that William

Holland

was heart and soul with his master Philip, told him about a plan which the two monarchs had agreed upon. They had made up their minds to massacre all their Protestant subjects in France and the Netherlands, and that was why Philip wished to keep the Spanish troops in the latter country.

William heard of this plot to destroy his fellow-countrymen without uttering a word of horror or surprise, without moving a muscle of his face. He listened quietly, and the King of France had no idea that he was telling the secret to the last man in the world to whom he should have spoken. For William was the very man who would stand in the way of this vile plot being carried out. And his calmness and his silence when he heard the fateful news of what Philip intended to do, earned him the name of William the Silent.

At that time William was still a Catholic. But he loved his country and its people, and he hated the Spanish garrison and the cruelties of those who persecuted the Reformers; he abhorred the Inquisition. Some years passed, and then a league of nobles drew up a "Request" to the Duchess Margaret and her council. This "Request" asked that the Edicts and the Inquisition should be withdrawn, and that the country should be governed by the States-General, the Parliament of the land, instead of by the Duchess and her council. The "Great Privilege" by this time had been completely set aside by the Spanish rulers.

Some of Margaret's council laughed the "Request" to scorn, and mocked the men who had brought it forward. One of the councillors cried out to the Duchess: "Is it possible that your Highness can be afraid of these beggars?" Later, the same man repeated his insult.

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

Some of the confederate nobles passed his house as he stood at the window, and he jeered at them, and said: "There go our fine beggars again!"

A day or two afterwards one of the leaders gave a great dinner to his friends, and a discussion arose as to the name they should give to their league. The host rose and told them what name the councillor had already applied to them. They were full of anger that gentlemen of the best blood of the land should be called beggars. But the host called upon them to adopt the name and make their enemies fear it. At the same moment he held up a beggar's leathern wallet and a beggar's wooden bowl. He hung the wallet round his neck, and drank a draught of wine from the bowl. Then he passed wallet and bowl to his neighbour, and they went from man to man, each hanging the wallet for an instant about his neck and draining the bowl. Now arose for the first time the call which was to be the rallying cry of the Dutch patriots, the cry which was to ring over land and sea in the many, many years of desperate struggle which lay before the nation: "Long live the Beggars!" The name was taken up by the people. The bands of Dutch patriots, fighting for their freedom, all used the famous word. By land they called themselves "Wild Beggars" and "Wood Beggars"; by water they were the famed and dreaded "Beggars of the Sea."



Beggar's
Medal.



Beggar's
Medal.

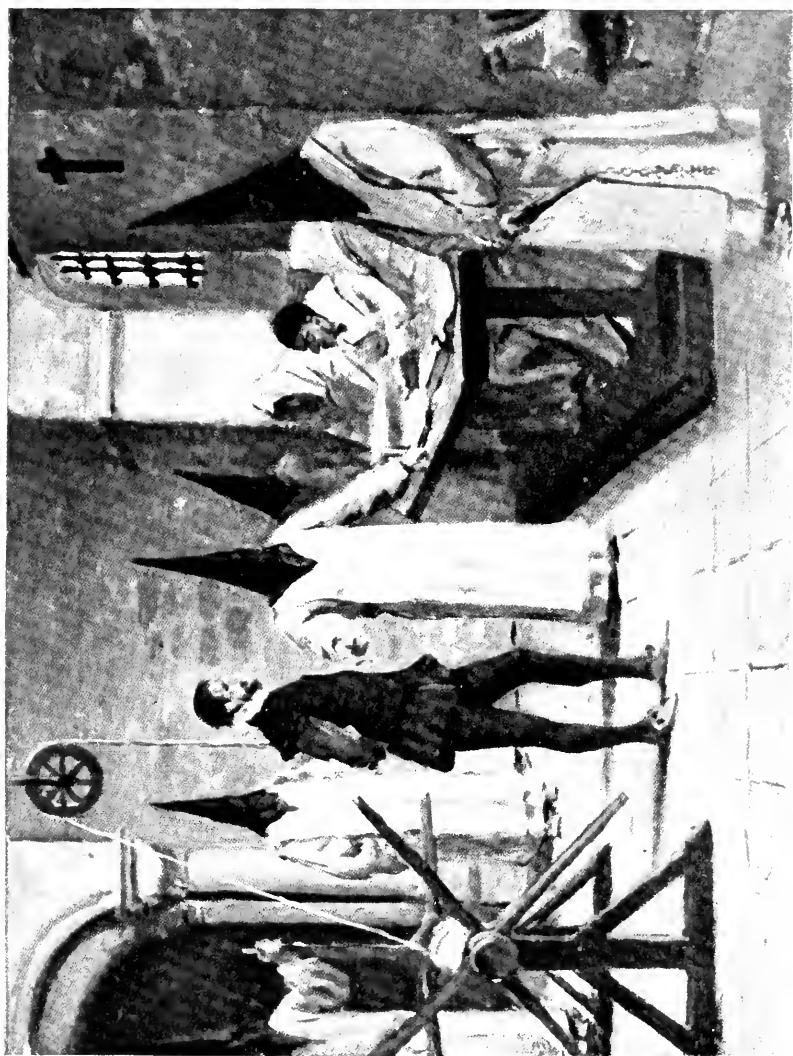
As this banquet was about to close, William of Orange entered the room, and with him were two great nobles of the Netherlands—Count Egmont and Count Horn. The revellers called upon William

Holland

and his friends to drink to the famous cry, "Long live the Beggars!" They did so, and left at once. But this trifling share of the feast meant death to Egmont and Horn, for Philip never forgot or forgave their presence at this revel, where the first move was made against his authority. It would have meant death to William also if Philip could have seized him, but the Prince of Orange was too wary to be caught.

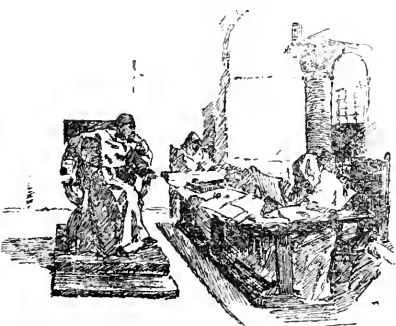
We have said that the "Request" begged that the Edicts might be withdrawn. What were these? They were Edicts issued against all those who became Protestants. The most famous Edict was that published by Charles V. in 1550. This Edict forbade any person to own or use a book written by one of the Reformers, to hold or be present at any religious meeting of Protestants, or to read or teach the Scriptures unless he had been educated at some great University. And what was the penalty if it was discovered that a person owned a Protestant hymn-book, or a father read a chapter of the Bible to his children at their own fireside? The penalty was a cruel and shameful death. The Edict said that all such were to be executed: "The men with the sword, and the women to be buried alive if they *do not* persist in their errors; if they do persist in them, then they are to be executed with fire; all their property in both cases being confiscated to the Crown." Thus, whether a Protestant held to his religion or not, it was all one; it was merely a choice of deaths, and his destruction was certain. The Edict went on to say that all who informed against Protestants should share in their property, and that all who did not betray them should be punished in the same manner as the heretics whom they tried to shield.

Under this terrible Edict thousands upon thousands



The Rise of the Dutch Republic

were put to death. When Philip came to the throne, he not only reissued this Edict, but also urged the



Inquisitors.

Inquisitors in the Netherlands to do their utmost to search out Protestants and destroy them. The methods of the Inquisition were secret and dreadful. It had a host of spies which were known as "familiars." These familiars made friends with all kinds of people ; they crept into every home and sat by every fireside. They watched and listened and

searched until they found some token or sign of the Protestant faith. Then they hastened to the Inquisitors and betrayed those to whom they had pretended friendship. The heretic was seized and carried to the prison of the Inquisition. He was brought before a secret tribunal and questioned. He knew not who accused him, he knew not who judged him. If he refused to confess that he was a heretic, he was put upon the rack and tortured. At last, by means of the most terrible cruelties, the confession was obtained, and execution followed.

In the Netherlands, so bold, frank and free was the nature of the people that victims were, as a rule, easily obtained. The Protestants were so numerous and so open in avowing their religion that the Inquisitors always had their hands full of victims. One day an Inquisitor seized a family consisting of a father, mother, and two sons. Their crime was that they had been absent from Mass, and it was believed that they practised private worship at home. One of the sons,

Holland

a mere boy, was asked what they did in their own house. The child replied : "We fall on our knees, and pray to God that He may enlighten our hearts and forgive our sins. We pray for our Sovereign, that his reign may be prosperous and his life peaceful. We also pray for the magistrates and others in authority, that God may protect and preserve them all." The whole family were condemned as Protestants and burned alive. Thomas Calberg, a weaver, was convicted of copying some hymns from a book printed in Geneva, a Protestant centre. He was burned alive. A man was convicted of not informing upon his wife, who had turned Protestant. He was a sound Catholic, but he lost his head by the sword, while his wife was burned.

These doings were not rare or occasional. The torturer and the executioner were busy everywhere. The sword, the stake, and the rack, were never idle for lack of victims. The latter came from all ranks ; the high-born noble, the wealthy merchant, the busy craftsman, the humble peasant, all were swept into the prisons of the Inquisitors. The sufferers were of all ages. It was a frequent thing for a whole family to be destroyed, from the aged grandparents to the child at the knee. It was the sight of this pitiless and grinding tyranny which had brought forth the "Request," and caused the Dutch people to take the first step in the casting off of the rule of Spain and the founding of the Dutch Republic.

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

CHAPTER VI

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC—II

IN a short time after the "Request" had been presented, there occurred the famous "image-breaking" in the Netherland churches. Roused to desperate anger by the cruelty of the Inquisition, mobs broke into the churches and dashed to pieces the images of saints and destroyed the painted windows. They looked upon these as symbols of the religion they hated, but, while they smashed stone and glass, they did no injury to any living creature. This outburst of violence seemed to gain for them, at the moment, what they wanted. The Duchess signed a decree that the Inquisition was abolished, and that public preaching of the Protestant religion would be allowed.

But Philip was filled with frenzied anger against his subjects. "It shall cost them dear," he cried, as he tore his beard for rage—"it shall cost them dear! I swear it by the soul of my father." And at the very moment that the Netherlanders were full of joy to think that the Inquisition had gone, he was forming his plans to establish it anew by the sword. He collected a splendid army in Italy, placed it under the command of his greatest general, the Duke of Alva, and sent it into the Netherlands. The Duke of Alva was sixty years of age, a cold, hard, grim soldier, to whom the words "pity" and "mercy" had no meaning. He quite understood what his master wanted, and he was ready to carry out the work. He was to put to death every Netherlander who dared to think otherwise than Philip either in politics or religion. It was his mission to

Holland

bring the men of the Low Countries under Philip's heel.

Alva began by striking at the great nobles, so that the people would be left without leaders. He wished to seize Orange, Egmont, and Horn. William of Orange slipped through his fingers, but he entrapped Count Egmont and Count Horn, and shut them up closely. Egmont was a brave man and a brilliant soldier, who had served Philip faithfully and well. Horn was a seaman, an Admiral, a man of fine character and upright life. These arrests filled all with terror. If Egmont, a great Catholic noble, one of the foremost men of the realm and one of the most faithful supporters of Philip, was not safe, then who could be safe? It is true that he had quaffed a cup of wine to the toast "Long live the Beggars!" but in the beginning the Beggars said not a word against the King. They were most loyal to Philip, because for a long time they believed that the misrule of the Netherlands was caused by the King's bad agents, and that Philip himself knew nothing of it. Now they were to find that their loyalty was misplaced, and that Philip, and no other man, was their deepest and bitterest enemy. Luckily, the greatest of the three nobles was safe. Philip was deeply vexed to discover that William of Orange had not been taken. The fear in which Orange was held by his enemies is shown by a remark of one of Philip's Ministers. "His capture," said the Minister, "would have been of more value than that of every man in the Netherlands. If the Duke has not caught the Silent One, he has caught nothing."

Alva now set up a council which he called the Council of Troubles; in a short time men began to call it the Council of Blood. They had reason to call it so,

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

for the council slew and slew without ceasing. Before it was called every person who was suspected of treason, and treason, in Alva's eyes, consisted simply in daring to think otherwise than Philip II. Most of the victims of the Council of Blood could not have been convicted in any court of law, for they had committed no crime with which the law could deal. But the council cared nothing for law or justice, and it had only one penalty—death and confiscation of property. The rich were in danger above all others, for the property of condemned persons went to the Crown, and Alva had promised Philip a great revenue from the wealth of his murdered victims.

At the head of the Blood Council was a blood-thirsty Spaniard named Vargas, who made hideous jokes upon the unhappy creatures whom he hurried to the scaffold. One day the name of a prisoner was called, and there was no answer. It was found that he had already been put to death. It was next found that he was quite innocent, and there had been a horrible blunder. "No matter for that," laughed Vargas; "it will be all the better for him when he takes his trial in another world." Another councillor named Hessels, himself a Netherlander, used to go to sleep at the council table. When wakened and asked his opinion, he would rub his eyes and call out: "To the gallows with him! to the gallows with him!"

"Thus the whole country became a charnel-house; the death-bell tolled hourly in every village; not a family but was called to mourn for its dearest relatives, while the survivors stalked listlessly about, the ghosts of their former selves, among the wrecks of their former homes. The spirit of the nation, within a few

Holland

months of the arrival of Alva, seemed hopelessly broken. The blood of its best and bravest had already stained the scaffold ; the men to whom it had been accustomed to look for guidance and protection were dead, in prison, or in exile. Submission had ceased to be of any avail, flight was impossible, and the spirit of vengeance had alighted at every fireside. The mourners went daily about the streets, for there was hardly a house which had not been made desolate. Columns and stakes in every street, the doorposts of private houses, the fences in the fields, were laden with human carcasses, strangled, burned, beheaded. The orchards in the country bore on many a tree the hideous fruit of human bodies."

In the early part of 1558 the most monstrous of all Philip's decrees was issued. It was a sentence of the Inquisition which condemned the whole of the people of the Netherlands to death as heretics. Only a few persons were excepted, and these by name. This tremendous death-warrant affected three million persons, men, women, and children, and Philip ordered it to be carried out without regard to age, sex, or condition. Now, we cannot suppose that the Government meant to slaughter the whole population and render the country a desert, but the effect of the decree was this : Where *all* had been condemned to death, then *any* might be seized at the will of the rulers, put to death and plundered of their property. It swept away all the tiresome formalities of trial and sentence, and, as Motley remarks, "Many a citizen, convicted of a hundred thousand florins, and of no other crime, saw himself suddenly tied to a horse's tail, with his hands fastened behind him, and so dragged to the gallows."

Some of these victims addressed the people as they

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

were dragged through the streets, and to silence them a new gag was invented. The tongue of each prisoner was forced through an iron ring, and then burned with a red-hot iron. This caused the tongue to swell so that it could not be drawn back through the ring, and to speak was impossible.

In this dark hour, when the Netherlands seemed utterly crushed beneath the feet of Philip and Alva, William of Orange boldly came forth to make head against the power which was destroying his country. He had been summoned by Alva to come before the Blood Council, but he had not been so foolish as to obey the command. The council had ordered his property to be seized, and in reply William issued a powerful protest which held up Philip to the world as a false ruler and a cruel tyrant. Now he gathered troops and prepared for open struggle with the vast power of Spain.



Harquebusier—Time of
William the Silent.

The first battle was fought on May 25, 1568, in Friesland. The Beggars were under the command of William's brother, Count Louis of Nassau, and another brother, Count Adolphus, was with the patriot army. Count Louis entangled his Spanish foe in a spot where swamps, bogs, and morasses formed traps and pitfalls for his enemy, and wholly overthrew a body of Alva's choicest troops. Unhappily, he lost his brother, for Count Adolphus was killed at the head of the cavalry.

This reverse lashed Alva to fury. He had laughed at the Beggars, calling them a rabble, and he had the utmost contempt for the Netherlanders, whom he styled

Holland

“men of butter.” He now declared that he would go against them himself, and he did so. But before starting he put to death Count Egmont and Count Horn. Alva marched into Friesland, and came up to Louis of Nassau at a point where the patriot army was hemmed in between the Spaniards and a deep river. Count Louis was in great difficulties with his soldiers, for many of them were foreign troops who were in a mutinous mood for lack of pay. The gallant leader did his best to foil Alva. He ordered the dikes to be cut, so that the sea should run over the land and hinder the march of the Spanish troops.

Alva sent forward a body of picked men, who drove off those destroying the dikes and closed the water-gates. Then the cunning Spaniard sent a small body to assail the enemy, and kept the main part of his forces carefully hidden. Thinking they had an easy task to cut their way out of the corner in which they were cooped, the patriots advanced. No sooner had they left their entrenchment than Alva fell upon them in full force. They gave way and drew back. The Spaniards pursued with the utmost fury. It was not a battle. It was a mere slaughter. Those who escaped the sword were driven into the river. Seven thousand patriots fell, and seven Spaniards. Count Louis did his utmost to rally his men, but all in vain. When he saw that things were hopeless, he stripped off his clothes, swam the river, and escaped.

As the Spaniards marched back from the field of battle they made ferocious havoc among the unhappy people of the countryside. They slew and burned and plundered without mercy. The sky was red with the glare of flaming houses. Peasants' huts, farmhouses, villages, towns, were reduced to heaps of ashes. Old



LONG LIVE THE BEGUINE. PAGE

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

and young were put to the sword, and some of the deeds done were so dreadful that even the merciless Alva felt compelled to hang some of the worst miscreants among his soldiery.

In face of this reverse William of Orange calmly laid new plans, calling upon his friends in the Netherlands to aid in driving the Spaniards out of the country. In



Pikeman.

order to secure the help of those who were still loyal to Philip, he declared war upon Alva, saying that the Duke had done these wicked deeds upon his own authority. He appealed for money to support the war for freedom, but he did not get as much as he needed, and that was given much more freely by the poor than by the rich. He now took the last step which could divide him still farther from Philip.

He became a Protestant. He entered the ranks of the Reformers, and fought for religious as well as civil liberty. William the Silent loved true liberty, and wished that all should enjoy it. He desired to leave all men free in the choice of their form of religion. This was no common form of opinion in those days, for we shall find that, when Protestants gained power, some of them were as eager to persecute Catholics as Catholics had been eager to persecute them.

Holland

CHAPTER VII

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC—III

THE struggle between the patriots of the Netherlands and the power of Spain was now fairly entered upon. No one outside the Netherlands had the smallest doubt as to the result. All thought that the vast power of Spain, supported by the finest soldiery in the world, must speedily crush untrained citizens. The Spanish soldier of that day had no peer: he was famed for his dauntless bravery; he was dreaded for his merciless ferocity. No one dreamed of the length of time over which the warfare would stretch. Generation after generation passed, and still Holland and Spain fought it out. The year 1568 saw the first clash of arms; eighty years afterwards, in 1648, peace was made, a peace in which Spain gave up for ever any claim to rule a country which had long been independent of her. This long war is one of the most wonderful ever waged in the history of the world. The sufferings of the Netherlands at the hands of their fierce enemies were dreadful; their stubborn and unconquerable resolution was marvellous; their final success was complete.

For some years after Alva's victory over Count Louis of Nassau, William of Orange was an exile, but watching the affairs of his country very closely. Alva loaded the people with taxes so heavy as almost to ruin trade, and, to add to other misfortunes, the sea made a tremendous assault upon the country in November, 1570. Driven by a furious tempest, the waves broke the dikes and rolled far across the land, drowning vast numbers of people and carrying vessels in among the

The Rise of the Dutch Republic



A Sea Beggar.

tree-tops. Those who escaped from the first rush of this vast flood took refuge on the roofs of houses and the steeples of churches. One hundred thousand human beings perished, and it seemed as if Nature had joined Philip and Alva in trying to destroy the country. But while the Spaniards were all-powerful by land, the men of Holland had begun to show their strength at sea. A number of patriot vessels were sailing the waters of the North Sea, manned by the daring and skilful mariners and fishermen of the Netherlands coasts. They called themselves the "Beggars of the Sea," and soon this name had a dreadful sound in the ears of their Spanish enemies. The Beggars of the Sea became the terror of the ocean. They lay in wait for Spanish fleets bringing troops and treasure, and attacked and captured them. Then they crowned their exploits by taking a city of Holland named Brill, which they held for William of Orange.

This seemed to be the signal for a general revolt in Holland, Zealand, and Friesland. Nearly all the cities threw off the Spanish yoke, and declared that they took Orange for a ruler, though still in the name of King Philip. The Beggars of the Sea now seized a Spanish fleet bringing money for the Spanish troops, and ammunition and stores. This was a severe blow to Alva, who was at his wits' end for money. He offered to give up the heavy taxes he had laid on the people, if they would pay him a million dollars a year. He summoned the Estates of Holland to meet him at the Hague, but they met at Dort instead, and refused to obey him. They renounced the authority of Alva, made William of Orange Stadtholder, and offered their

Holland

fortunes to assist William to drive out the Spanish troops and win religious freedom for their country.

The cities with joy accepted William as their ruler. The townspeople rose and drove away those magistrates who had carried out the will of Alva, and put in their places men who loved the patriot cause. At some places the terrified officials had to fly into hiding, for their cruel deeds were remembered against them. At a city called Gouda the cruel Burgomaster had been a willing instrument of the Council of Blood. He had seized many people and put them to death. When the revolt broke out in the city he fled for his life. He sought refuge in the house of a widow, and begged her to hide him. The widow led him to a small secret room. "Shall I be safe here?" cried the trembling magistrate. "Oh yes, Sir Burgomaster," replied the widow; "'twas in that very place that my husband lay concealed when you, accompanied by the officers of justice, were searching the house that you might bring him to the scaffold for his religion. Enter the room, your worship; I will be responsible for your safety." Thus faithfully did the humble widow of a hunted and murdered Calvinist protect the life of the magistrate who had brought desolation to her hearth.

At this time William of Orange was in Germany, gathering troops to aid his brother Louis. Count Louis had taken the city of Mons, and a Spanish army had shut him up there and was laying siege to the town. William was hoping to gain help from France, but all his hopes were destroyed by the terrible Massacre of St. Bartholomew. On August 24, 1572, the Huguenots, the French Protestants, were attacked and slain in great numbers by the orders of their own King, Charles IX., urged by his mother, Catherine de' Medici.

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

William marched to Mons, and on September 11 he had a very narrow escape of losing his life. The Spaniards made a night attack on his camp. It was a complete surprise, and the enemy cut their way right into the heart of the camp, and reached the very tent where William was sleeping. He would have been seized and slain had it not been for a little spaniel that slept on his bed. The faithful creature woke the Prince by barking and by scratching its master's face with its paws. William had just time to leap upon a horse, when the Spaniards burst into his tent. The Prince never forgot the good little dog. To the day of his death a spaniel of the same race always slept at his bedside.

William had to leave Mons to its fate, and it was seized by the Spaniards, who murdered and robbed the inhabitants in most cruel fashion. After the fall of Mons, the towns of Flanders gave up the struggle against Philip; but the sturdy Hollanders were resolved to fight it out, and the battle for freedom now fell to the hands of the Dutch. William retired to Holland to make a last stand against Spanish tyranny.

Things still continued to go badly for the patriots. A number of cities among the Dutch were still held for the King, and one of these was the city of Tergoes, which was the key of Walcheren and Zeeland. It was in the hands of Spanish troops, and the patriots laid siege to it. Alva was very anxious to keep the place, and ordered a Spanish commander to carry aid to his comrades in Tergoes. The city stood on an island, and was cut off from the shore by the "Drowned Land." This was the name given to a



Dutch Officers.

Holland

stretch of land which had been buried beneath the ocean by a terrible flood, and lost for ever. The commander tried to send troops to Tergoes by ship, but there he failed. The Sea Beggars were masters on their native element, and foiled him with ease. Then a Spanish Colonel, named Mondragon, resolved on a most daring and wonderful piece of work: he would march men across the "Drowned Land," and spring from the very depths of the sea upon the patriots.

He had heard that at low-tide men who knew the great mud flat could pick a way across to the island. The land was never bare of water—far from it; there was always four or five feet of water above the mud, and the tide rose ten feet. There were also three river channels, where the water was always deep. It was a most daring and desperate undertaking, for the crossing was ten miles wide, and, if overtaken by the tide, the troops would be drowned to a man. Mondragon picked three thousand men, and led them to the water's edge after darkness had fallen. He then told them of the dangerous task which lay before them. Not a man faltered. Each took a sack containing powder and biscuit upon his head, and, led by Mondragon and the guides, they plunged into the sea, almost in single file, so narrow was the treacherous path. Wading, swimming, struggling along, with the water never lower than the breast, often up to the chin, this dauntless band thrust their way across the "Drowned Land." Had the Sea Beggars only known of the plan, how easy would it have been to beat under water that long line of heads dotting the sea! But five hours of desperate effort brought them to dry land once more, with the loss of only nine men drowned in the dark waters.

With the break of day Mondragon led his men upon

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

Tergoes. The patriots were thunderstruck at sight of this army which had sprung upon them from the depths of the sea. They fell into a panic, and fled for their ships, their whole rearguard being cut to pieces by the Spanish pursuers. Such were the terrible enemies, brave as they were ferocious, with whom William the Silent and his followers had to contend.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC—IV

ALVA was resolved to strike at Holland as the seat of resistance to the Spanish power. His son, Don Frederic, seized the towns of Zutphen and Noorden, slaying, burning, and plundering, till each town was but a heap of ruins. But every fresh outrage seemed only to nerve the brave and stubborn Dutch to fresh efforts on behalf of freedom. Every method of defence was used, and every spot was a battle-ground. Spaniard and Hollander fought on land and water, and, when the latter was frozen, on the ice. A fleet of warships became frozen up near Amsterdam. Don Frederic sent a body of troops over the ice to seize the vessels. But the sailors dug a wide trench round their ships, and defied the approach of the enemy ; then, as the Spaniards drew near, out glided a body of musketeers upon skates, and attacked the enemy. The Spaniards slipped and slid in all directions as they tried to meet these swift foes, and the Dutch skaters won a brilliant victory. The Spaniards had to fly, leaving the ice covered with their dead. But they were quick to learn a new lesson of war, even if an enemy was the teacher. Alva at once

Holland

obtained seven thousand pairs of skates, and before long his troops were shooting across the ice as nimbly as their opponents.

To make their way into Holland the Spaniards must seize Haarlem, the key of the country, and Don Frederic resolved to take the place at all costs. The siege of Haarlem is second only to the siege of Leyden in this war, where men fought together with a fury scarce to be found in any other story of the world's warfare. Don Frederic thought the capture of Haarlem would be an easy task. The walls were weak, the garrison was no more than four thousand, and he marched thither at the head of thirty thousand troops. But every living soul in the town rose to oppose him ; men, women, and children, they swarmed to the walls, and when the Spanish guns began to break down the defences, all worked night and day to repair the damage. Among the garrison was enrolled a body of respectable women, three hundred strong, armed with musket, sword, and dagger, and these wives and daughters of the citizens fought with heroic bravery in the forefront of the battle.

An assault was made. The Spanish troops rushed to the walls, only to be met with such fierce resistance as cowed even their fiery valour. The people swarmed to the ramparts and assailed the Spaniards, not only with weapons, but with many strange forms of defence. They hurled down upon the enemy large stones, poured boiling oil upon them, flung burning coals into their faces, and blazing hoops smeared with pitch were skillfully flung so as to hang about their necks. In the end the Spaniards were beaten off with great loss, while only a few of the townspeople were killed.

Don Frederic now laid siege to the place, and a long



THE FLEET OF LEIDEN 1632

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

and bitter struggle began. The Prince of Orange tried to send relief into the town, but the Spaniards captured his convoys, and food began to run short in Haarlem. Again the Spaniards made an assault, and again they were beaten off by the heroic burghers. Don Frederic wished to give up the siege, but his father would not hear of it. He said he would disown his son if Don Frederic marched away from Haarlem ; “and,” went on the grim old soldier, “should he fall in the siege, I will myself take the field to maintain it ; and when we have both perished, the Duchess, my wife, shall come from Spain to do the same.”

All through the winter the struggle raged. There were constant skirmishes, attacks, and counter-attacks. Sometimes a band of citizens sallied out and made a dash on a part of the Spanish camp, slew the guards, and rushed back to the town, carrying the provisions and ammunition they had seized—welcome additions to their meagre stores. Their friends outside tried to send help, but the Spaniards were on the watch to repel these attempts. On one occasion a band of patriots retreated along the top of a narrow dike, pursued by a thousand of the enemy. John Horing of Horn, a bold Dutchman, planted himself upon the dike, and kept the foe at bay. With sword and shield he held a thousand Spaniards in check while his friends escaped. When they were safe, the noble hero plunged into the water and made his escape, untouched by spear or bullet.

Winter passed, spring came, and the combats on the ice were now combats on the water. Here the Spaniards held the upper hand, and soon stopped all aid from reaching the city. The unhappy people of Haarlem now suffered all the worst miseries of famine. Men,

Holland

women, and children, fell dead in the street by scores, perishing of pure hunger, and those who lived had not the strength to bury them. William made a last attempt to send food into the town. It was a failure. He had sent word to Haarlem by pigeons ; the birds carried tiny pieces of paper with messages upon them. Two of these were shot as they passed over the Spanish camp, and the messages were read and the plan of relief discovered. The Spaniards cut the convoy to pieces, and the last hope of the besieged people was gone.

They resolved to form a column, with the fighting men on the outside, and cut their way through the Spanish lines. But Don Frederic now offered them such terms as to induce them to surrender. They surrendered, but the faithless Spaniard did not keep his promise. Two thousand of the brave defenders were slaughtered in cold blood. Don Frederic was now master of Haarlem, but it had cost him seven months of desperate warfare and twelve thousand of his finest troops.

A few months later the bloodthirsty Duke of Alva was recalled from the Netherlands, and Philip sent a new Governor, whose name was Requesens. The Spanish cause still continued strong by land, but on the ocean the Sea Beggars swept all before them, and won victory after victory. The spring of 1574 brought a great loss to the patriot cause. The Spaniards had laid siege to the city of Leyden, and William the Silent sent his gallant brother, Count Louis, to relieve it. That frank and fearless soldier marched at once to carry out the duty. He met the Spanish foe, but, alas! victory was not to crown his banners. His army was cut to pieces, and the noble Louis, together with

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

his brother Henry, fell in the defeat. Their bodies were never found.

Again the siege of Leyden was pressed closely. The second siege lasted five months, and there is no more memorable siege in history. There was but a scanty supply of food in the city, and ere long it was held in the clutch of famine. The Spaniards lay so closely round the walls that none could venture out in search of food, and no news reached the people save by carrier-pigeons and a few daring fellows called "jumpers," who crept through the lines of the enemy at the risk of their lives. Day by day things grew worse in the city, but still the burghers held out and put their trust in William of Orange. Surely he would do something to save them.

William scarce knew what to do. He had no army strong enough to drive the Spaniards away, and the citizens were starving. Then a plan came into his mind—a most desperate plan, for it meant widespread and terrible destruction. He would break the dikes, and let the sea rush over the country and flood the great plain in which Leyden stands. It would mean undoing the work of many a lifetime ; it would mean that rich farms, fruitful pastures, smiling villages, would sink beneath the depths of the ocean; but there was no other way to save the city.

The patriots received his decision with stern joy. "Better a drowned land than a lost land !" they cried, and many gave the whole of their wealth to aid the work of destruction. The dikes were cut, the ocean flowed in ; but it gained slowly on the land, for the wind was contrary and beat back the waters. Day by day the people of Leyden strained their eyes in hopes of catching sight of the sea sweeping across the green

Holland

plain which spread around their city. In the midst of the city stands an old Roman tower, still to be seen. To the top of the tower the citizens climbed, and looked out eagerly for the rolling flood, for the sails of the vessels which should bring them deliverance.

William of Orange had been sick of a fever. As soon as he could rise from his bed he sent forward a fleet, manned by Sea Beggars and laden with provisions, to the aid of the beleaguered town. Wildest of all these Beggars of the Sea were eight hundred Zealanders, men of strange and terrible appearance, scarred and maimed by the wounds of a hundred battles, as savage in the fury of combat as they were skilful in seamanship, and wearing crescents in their caps, with the motto, "Rather Turkish than Popish." They neither gave nor took quarter: it was a battle to the death between them and their Spanish foes. Their hatred of the Spaniard rose to frenzy. In a combat on a dike near Leyden, "one of them knelt on a Spaniard whom he had struck down, tore out his heart, set his teeth into it for a moment, and then threw it on the ground, exclaiming, 'Tis too bitter!' This heart, bearing the marks of the seaman's teeth, was preserved for a long time at Delft."

The fleet moved very slowly, for it was baffled by a steady east wind and checked by Spanish batteries; it had to force dikes and barriers held by the enemy, and the agony of Leyden deepened day by day. It was an agony which even Haarlem had not known. All ordinary food had long ago been eaten. Dogs, cats, rats, and other vermin, were greedily devoured. When an animal was killed, crowds of starving wretches gathered to snatch at any morsel that might fall, and knelt to lap the blood which ran along the pavement.

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

Women and children turned rubbish-heaps over and over in search of scraps of food, and fought fiercely with famishing dogs to secure any odd morsel. Whole families died of hunger, and a disease caused by famine broke out and slew thousands more. Yet the people held out. Better pest and famine than the entrance of the Spaniard.

The enemy laughed the starving townspeople to scorn. "As well," they cried, "can the Prince of Orange pluck the stars from the sky as bring the ocean to the walls of Leyden for your relief." This seemed too true. The wind kept in the east, the waters were steadily rolled back. Then, at the very last moment, when it seemed as if the people could do no more and that the city must fall, there came a sudden and wonderful change. Round swung the wind, right out to sea, and blew upon the shore in a tremendous tempest. Up swelled the huge waves and rolled far over the land, raising the ships and sweeping them on in triumph over the ruined dikes, over house-tops and tree-tops, straight for the lines of the enemy. When a vessel touched bottom in some shallow, the wild Zealanders leapt into the water and shouldered her through by main strength.

The Spaniards in the besieging forts were terrified at this awful onset of the ocean, bearing against them the terrible Beggars of the Sea, and they hastened to escape ere their road was cut off by the advancing flood. But the Zealanders were upon them with the utmost fury, and with strange weapons. They hurled harpoons among them with deadly aim. They dragged them into the water with boat-hooks and drowned them, or despatched them with daggers. When darkness fell, only one Spanish fort was left between the

Holland

fleet and the city. But that was strong and filled with troops.

That night a chain of many lights was seen moving across the waters from the fort, and a sound was heard like a clap of thunder. The noise was caused by the fall of one of the walls of the city ; the lights were from the lanterns of the Spaniards flying from the fort. Thus at the moment when Leyden was bare and defenceless before them, they fled in fear of the flood and the Sea Beggars. The next day the patriots entered the city in triumph—Leyden was relieved. On the very day after, the wind swung back to its old quarter. “It was as if the waters, having now done their work, had been rolled back to the ocean by an Omnipotent Hand ; for in the course of a few days the land was bare again, and the work of reconstructing the dikes was begun.”

In memory of this wonderful deliverance the famous University of Leyden was founded, and thus, in the darkest hour of their struggle, the Dutch gave proof of their love of learning. Its charter is also a proof of how they clung to the form of loyalty, for it gravely puts Philip in the place of founder, and says that he is establishing the University through his “dear cousin, William, Prince of Orange.”

CHAPTER IX

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC—V

THIS holding to the mere form of loyalty was soon to pass away. In 1575 the States of Holland and Zealand formed a union, and made William of Orange their

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

ruler while the war should last. Their next step was to throw off allegiance to Philip, and try to find a foreign State which would help them in their hard struggle with Spain. William sought help from Queen Elizabeth of England, but she feared to offend powerful enemies if she aided the Netherlands, and at first she did nothing. In the end she helped Holland more than did any other ruler.

William now formed a plan of removing the people of Holland and Zealand to another land across the ocean. They were to burn houses and windmills, open the sluices, cut the dikes, sink the land beneath the ocean, and sail away with their goods, leaving nothing to the tyrant Philip save a waste of waters. But the death of Requesens suddenly changed the face of affairs. The war came to a lull for a time, and there was a chance for the harried Dutch to breathe and gather themselves together for the next blast of the storm.

It was some time before Philip sent another Governor, and in the interval the Spanish troops broke into fierce mutiny. They had not been paid for years, and there was no money to pay them. The war was draining every penny out of Philip's treasury, and in turning the Netherlands against him he had lost by far the richest part of his dominions. The angry soldiery determined to seize a city and plunder it, and so take pay for themselves. They seized Antwerp, at that day the richest city in the world, and sacked it. Of all the dreadful doings of this long war, the worst were seen in this "Spanish Fury," as the attack on Antwerp came to be rightly called. The streets ran with blood ; fire, murder, torture, every horror of war, was suffered by the unhappy citizens ; and the mutinous troops divided among themselves five millions of crowns.

Holland

On the day before the Spanish Fury, there rode across the border into the Netherlands a cavalier, attended by six men-at-arms and a dark-looking man who had the air of a Moorish slave. But this man who looked like a slave was no other than Don John of Austria, brother of King Philip, and the new Governor. He had come in disguise, lest he should be recognized while passing through France. Don John was a young man, under thirty years of age, but already famous as a great leader and a most brilliant soldier. Three years before, he had won the great sea-fight at Lepanto against the Turks, and he came, at the height of his renown, to subdue the Netherlands for his brother.

But, instead of glory, he was to find a grave in that land, whose stout-hearted people were to check the famous warrior by their steady and unyielding opposition, and where his fiery spirit was to be fretted into a fever by Philip's cold neglect of his needs and requests. Don John entered into parley with the States of the Netherlands, and agreed to a treaty by which the foreign troops should be withdrawn, and the old rights and privileges of the cities be restored to them. William of Orange put no faith in this treaty, and would not recognize it in his State of Holland and Zeeland. He knew that Spanish promises could not be trusted, and he was proved to be right.

Early in 1578 Don John attacked the patriots, and the Battle of Gemblours was fought. Don John, aided by a brilliant young soldier, Alexander of Parma, won a great victory, and destroyed the patriot army with terrible slaughter. Don John also took many small towns, and seemed to be mastering the country, when he was seized with a fever, and died on October 1, 1578.

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

His heart was buried in the Netherlands, and his body was taken back to Spain.

The new Governor was Alexander of Parma, son of the Duchess Margaret who had once ruled over the Netherlands, and thus nephew to King Philip and the last Governor, Don John of Austria. Parma was a great soldier, and, like a soldier, he obeyed orders. Philip commanded him to reduce William of Orange and his followers to obedience, and Parma strove by every means, fair and foul, to obey his uncle's commands. Parma, like the other Governors, found that William the Silent was the great stumbling-block in Philip's way. The people loved the great Prince, clung to him, followed him, obeyed him. Were he once out of the way, it would appear a simple thing to conquer the people who had lost their mighty leader. Philip had tried to persuade William to desert the cause of freedom. He had tried to bribe William to do so, offering him enormous rewards. Both methods had failed. Now the King fell back on the plan of murdering him, if a murderer could be found. For years the King and his friends tried secret means of taking the great patriot's life. Then Philip came into the open in search of an assassin.

In 1580 he issued a ban against William the Silent. The ban declared that William of Orange was a traitor, miscreant, and outlaw; it offered twenty-five thousand gold crowns for his head, it promised that the assassin should receive pardon for every crime he might have committed, and should be raised to noble rank. William replied with a powerful paper, which he called an "Apology." It contained a stinging account of Philip's crimes and misgovernment, and denounced him as a Spanish tyrant. This appeal to the civilized world was sent to nearly all the rulers of Europe.

Holland

Holland made her own answer to the ban: she cast off, once and for all, the authority of Philip, and made William her ruler. This step was taken at a meeting of the Estates at the Hague on July 26, 1581. William himself did not desire the position. He wished to see a French Prince, the Duke of Anjou, in the seat of sovereignty. He thought that by giving the rule to Anjou the country would obtain valuable foreign aid, but the Estates would not hear of it. They wanted William the Silent—Father William, as they fondly called him—for their lord, and they would have no other man. But a number of the Netherland provinces accepted the rule of Anjou, and thus the Low Countries as a whole became divided into three parts. The Flemish provinces, which now form the kingdom of Belgium, fell into two divisions. One division had submitted to Spain, and was in the hands of Parma. The other division was for a time under the rule of Anjou. The fortunes of Holland, the third part of the Netherlands, were guided by William of Orange.

Anjou had a good deal of English support, for it was believed at that time that Queen Elizabeth meant to marry him. Thus, when he came to the Netherlands, many famous men of Elizabeth's Court were in his train—Sir Philip Sidney, the Earl of Leicester, and Lords Willoughby, Sheffield, and Howard. Anjou arrived in the Netherlands in February, 1582, and the next month saw the first effects of the ban.

On Sunday, March 15, 1582, William of Orange was leaving his dining-room, when a young man came up to him as if to present a petition. William took the paper, and at the same moment the young man whipped out a pistol, placed it to William's head, and fired. The bullet entered the Prince's head under the right ear, passed

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

through the roof of the mouth, and came out of the left jaw. The assassin was killed at once by those around William, and the latter was led to his chamber. All thought that the wound was mortal, and there was the deepest grief at this terrible calamity. William himself believed that he was dying, and calmly gave directions for the disposal of affairs after his death. But, terrible as the wound was, it did not prove fatal. To the joy of all, he recovered, though the strain of this anxious time killed his wife, Charlotte of Bourbon, who died on May 5, three days after a great service of thanksgiving for the recovery of William.

When inquiry was made into the affair, it was found that the young man was a Spaniard, who had attempted to murder William to obtain a reward from his master, a Spanish merchant of Antwerp. The latter had made an agreement with Philip to murder Orange, and had bribed one of his servants to commit the deed.

In their joy at his wonderful escape, the Dutch people now begged William to become their Sovereign for life instead of for the period of the war. He consented, but he was never installed as ruler of the country. Before the arrangements had been completed he was in his grave, for a second attempt to murder him was only too successful.

The year 1583 saw trouble arise between Anjou and the provinces he held. The French Duke wished to overthrow the constitution under which he ruled and seize the Flemish cities for himself. His troops made an attempt to capture Antwerp, and this is known as the "French Fury." But its results were very different from the terrible "Spanish Fury," for the townspeople made a splendid defence of their homes, slew a great part of the French soldiery, and drove the rest out in

Holland

disorder. In June, 1583, the Duke of Anjou left the Netherlands, never to return, and Parma began to master the towns which had owned Anjou as ruler. No one was now left to make head against Spain save William the Silent and his faithful Dutch among their dikes and swamps.

Nor were the Dutch to have their great, wise, and unselfish leader at their head for long. Attempt after attempt had been made upon William's life, but all failed until the fatal day of Tuesday, July 12, 1584. On that day, at about two o'clock, William walked out of the dining-hall of the house where he was staying in the town of Delft, near Rotterdam. As he went up the stairs a man sprang out of a small archway beside the steps and fired a pistol full into his body. William staggered back into the arms of one of his attendants, exclaiming, "Oh, my God, have mercy on my soul! Oh, my God, have mercy upon this poor people!" Thus his last thought was of his country, for he died in a few moments.

The assassin fled for his life, but was pursued and captured. He proved to be a man named Balthasar Gérard, an agent of Parma. He gained access to William's house as the bearer of despatches from France, announcing the death of the Duke of Anjou. Gérard was a Catholic who had for years dwelt upon the hope of slaying William the Silent, whom he looked upon as the great enemy of his faith. When seized he did not attempt to deny his crime. Nay, he confessed, and gloried in it. He was put to the most terrible tortures, and endured all with serene calm. Then he was doomed to a most cruel death, and was executed on July 14. Had William lived, Gérard would have escaped torture; the wretched assassin had murdered the very

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

man who was opposed to those dreadful forms of punishment.

The delight of Philip and Parma at this cruel murder was beyond words. They gave high praise to Gérard, and after a long delay Philip gave the friends of the murderer the reward, and raised Gérard's parents to the rank of nobility. But to the people of Holland the blow was terrible. They had lost their great Prince, who had stripped himself of his wealth to aid them, who had fought for them, toiled for them, bled for them. "As long as he lived he was the guiding-star of a whole brave nation, and when he died the little children cried in the streets."

CHAPTER X

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC—VI

WHEN the wisest and greatest man of the Netherlands had been murdered, it looked as if it would be easy for Philip to have his own way. For while William the Silent had gone, Alexander of Parma, Philip's servant, remained, and Parma was the most famous and skilful general of the age. Parma now resolved to seize Antwerp, which was in the hands of patriots, and he had two reasons for so doing. First, Antwerp must be taken before he could strike at Holland. Second, Philip was aiming at the conquest of England, and it would be a great help to secure the best port in the Netherlands, a port where a strong fleet could lie in safety, ready to sail for the Thames. Parma's plan to reduce Antwerp was daring, though simple. It was to build a bridge across the great River Scheldt between the city and the sea, and thus to block the way of vessels and

Holland

prevent supplies being carried in. William the Silent had known of Parma's plan some time before his death, and had pointed out a simple mode of defence. The building of the bridge would block the river road to Antwerp. Very well. Let the citizens break the great dike on the coast, and permit the sea to flow across the low-lying meadows to the city. The Sea Beggars would look to it then, and sail their light vessels up to the town with ample supplies. When Parma was baffled and had retired, it would be easy to build up the dike again and drain the meadows.

This wise advice was not taken. Many people of the city cried out upon breaking the dike and flooding the meadows. They were led by the guild of butchers, whose cattle fed on the pastures which would be submerged. These people laughed to scorn the idea that Parma could build the bridge in face of attack from the city, of swift-rushing tides, of heavy masses of ice dashing down the wintry stream. But in spite of all these obstacles the great commander built his bridge and closed the river. At once there was a cry to open the dikes. Too late. Parma had seized the dikes, and they were held by some of his best troops.

Now, there lived in Antwerp a very clever Italian named Gianibelli. He was so learned that the common people believed that he was a magician. He offered to assail the bridge with fire-ships, and at last the magistrates gave him two vessels. These ships he filled with thousands of pounds of powder covered with all kinds of missiles. One was to be exploded at the right moment by means of a slow match, the other by a piece of clockwork, which would be timed to strike fire from a flint at an arranged instant. One evening, together with a number of smaller vessels, these floating

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

volcanoes were sent downstream against the barrier. One blew up doing little damage, the other ran against the bridge and came to rest quietly. The Spaniards swarmed aboard this vessel to examine it, and at that moment the clockwork fired the powder below. There was a terrific explosion. Vessel and Spaniards were blown to pieces. A vast mass of missiles was hurled forth, dealing frightful destruction all around. Men were killed, ships were sunk, the earth trembled. Parma himself had a narrow escape. He was struck senseless by a missile, and the page who was carrying his helmet behind him was killed.

The people of Antwerp now failed to take advantage of this heavy blow they had dealt to their enemy. They did not follow up the explosion with an attack on the bridge, and before long Parma had repaired the damage, and made arrangements to deal with such vessels if they should be launched again.

A long, weary siege followed, marked by fierce combats for possession of the dikes. There was great confusion in the city. The mob, when threatened with famine, rose in fury, demanding bread or peace, and there were factions who fought together inside the walls instead of assailing the enemy without. In the end, after thirteen months' siege, the city surrendered, and Parma made a triumphal entry on August 30, 1585. He entered a place which had been stripped of the flower of its inhabitants. The Protestants would not live under Philip, and they left their native city in vast numbers. Merchants, manufacturers, artisans, the men of wealth, skill, and brains, sought other homes. Many went to Amsterdam, many to London. The rise of our own great capital to vast commercial importance dates from the fall of Antwerp. One-third of its wealthy

Holland

merchants transferred their business to the banks of the Thames. Parma missed them. "Certainly," he wrote to Philip, "the city is most forlorn and poverty-stricken, the heretics having all left it."

Holland now turned to England for aid, nor did she turn in vain. The truth was that Elizabeth wished to keep the Provinces at war with Philip, for she knew that he had designs against England. If the Dutch made peace with him, it would set Philip free to turn the whole power of Spain upon her. Late in 1585 she sent the Earl of Leicester with a body of English troops to the Netherlands, and in the autumn of the next year he laid siege to the city of Zutphen, on the Yssel, a branch of the Rhine, a town held for Spain. Parma himself marched to its relief, and on October 2, 1586, there took place a skirmish famous in our history, for it saw the fall of that most noble gentleman and gallant soldier, Sir Philip Sidney.

An ambuscade of five hundred Englishmen was lying in wait for Parma's provision train. The train came up, but guarded by more than three thousand superb veteran troops, the pick of Parma's splendid soldiery. Undaunted by the tremendous odds, the Englishmen charged home, and did fierce execution among the enemy. But their numbers were too small, and they did not seize the convoy. Sir Philip Sidney was struck down by a shot which shattered his leg and caused him intense agony. His attendants brought him a bottle of water to slake the fierce thirst caused by the loss of blood. As the water was placed to his lips, Sidney saw a wounded English soldier looking at it with longing eyes. He at once gave the water to the poor fellow, saying, "Thy need is greater than mine." A few days later this noble and chivalrous man died of his wound.

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

The expedition of Leicester to the Netherlands was not a success. The proud favourite of Queen Elizabeth was neither a soldier nor a statesman ; he managed affairs so badly that the Dutch began first to distrust and then to detest him. Towards the end of 1587 he returned to England. To show his feelings, he struck a medal which pictured the Dutch as a flock of sheep, ungrateful for the care of an English mastiff. The Dutch returned the compliment by figuring him as a clumsy ape which clasped her young so closely as to smother them.

But this expedition of Leicester marks a very important turning time in Dutch affairs. The United Provinces of Holland and Zealand began to manage their own affairs as a republic. William the Silent had been their Sovereign. When his son, Prince Maurice, came to authority, it was as Stadtholder, the chief man of the Dutch Republic, not the Sovereign of a State.

The next year, 1588, is a great landmark in our history. It saw the rout and ruin of the Great Armada, which Philip of Spain launched against Elizabeth and England. Now the Dutch stood nobly by their English friends. Parma and a splendid army of veterans lay on the Netherland coast ready to join the Spanish fleet ; but the Beggars of the Sea, the hardy mariners of Holland and Zealand, lay off the coast and dared them to venture out in their transports, and the Spaniards were held at bay.

Holland

CHAPTER XI

PRINCE MAURICE

ALEXANDER OF PARMA lived for four years after the wreck of the Armada, dying in 1592, and the last days of the great general saw the rise of a still greater soldier among the ranks of his opponents. This was Prince Maurice, the second son of William the Silent, who became the most brilliant soldier of his age, and led the Dutch to victory after victory. He gathered and trained an excellent army, and took care to pay his men—a thing not always done in those days, for commanders were often short of money. But Maurice had behind him the wealthy and growing cities of Holland, and the States-General, the authorities who ruled the republic, kept him well supplied with funds.

While the other cities of the Netherlands—those under Spanish rule—decayed and wasted, the cities of Holland prospered and thrived, for they drew to themselves the trade which fell away from the provinces held by Spain. Already the Dutch were building that splendid navy which was to give them great power, not only in the home waters, but in distant seas, and was to strike blow after blow at the strength of Spain. Dutch vessels traded everywhere, and brought home wealth from every clime to fill the purse of the States-General in the struggle with Philip.

From the time that Maurice of Nassau took up the battle with Spain, the cause of the patriots began steadily to prosper. The first step was to regain fortresses which had fallen into the hands of the enemy, and in the very beginning a deed of most wonderful daring was crowned

Prince Maurice

with complete success. Maurice wished to seize Breda, a city which belonged to his own family, but now held by Parma. The city was guarded by a castle, and to this castle a boatman carried peat for fuel. The boatman was a patriot, and he offered to carry soldiers through the water-gate into the castle, hidden under a layer of peat. Seventy picked men were packed closely in the hold of the little vessel, boards placed over them, and blocks of peat piled on the boards. The vessel was delayed by bad weather, so that the poor fellows were shut up four days in their narrow quarters and suffered cruelly from cold and hunger. Then she sprang a leak, and when the castle was reached, the men in the hold were crouching knee-deep in icy water. The Spanish officer of the guard came on board, and at that moment sounds of coughing rose from the hold where the shivering men were hidden. Luckily, the captain of the vessel was a quick, shrewd fellow, and he started the pumps going, and the noise of their working drowned the sounds from below.

Before long the captain was in a fresh difficulty. The workmen unloaded the peat so fast that the boards began to come into sight, and he saw that the hidden men would be discovered. He hit on some excuse for dismissing the labourers for that day, giving them money to go to the alehouse, and bidding them be there early next morning. One of the men remarked that the peat was not so good as usual, and the captain of the guard would not be satisfied with it.

"Oh," said the shipman quietly, "the best part of the cargo is below. It is intended specially for the captain. He will be satisfied when he gets that."

At midnight the boards were raised, and the men who had thus been brought into the castle in so cool and

Holland

daring a fashion burst upon their enemies. It was not likely that the gallant fellows who had endured so much would now be foiled, and they actually took the place without losing a single man. Next the city was seized, and this splendid exploit was hailed with great joy throughout the United Provinces as the beginning of an era of victory. And an era of victory it proved. Maurice marched from success to success. He gave proof of his wonderful ability by seizing stronghold after stronghold, until he had driven the enemy from most of the fortresses which they held in Holland.

After the death of Parma, Philip sent his nephew, the Archduke Ernest of Austria, to rule in the Netherlands. He was a gentle, good-natured man, and soon died ; he was not at all the sort of Governor to make head against Prince Maurice, who was busily engaged in sweeping all traces of Spanish rule out of Holland and Zeeland. It was now that the Dutch Republic settled down almost exactly within the limits which it was to occupy during the palmy days of its great career—the limits which mark the modern kingdom of Holland.

The next Governor of the Netherlands was the brother of the last, the Archduke Albert of Austria. He was also to become the son-in-law of Philip, and the latter resolved to hand over the Netherlands to his daughter and her husband. Albert called upon Maurice and the States-General to surrender their provinces to his government, but they took no notice of the appeal. They cared neither for Spanish entreaties nor threats, and felt there was no safety save in their own strong hands and sharp swords. Albert brought with him to the Netherlands a most distinguished prisoner of Spain. This was Philip William, eldest son of William the

Prince Maurice

Silent, the elder brother of Prince Maurice. As a schoolboy of fourteen he had been kidnapped by Spanish agents and carried to Spain. There he had been trained in Spanish ways, and had become a Spaniard in appearance and bearing. Still, he retained a deep regard for his father's name and character.

The English and the Dutch now joined hands for a return blow at Philip. The English remembered the Great Armada; the Dutch had a thousand wrongs to avenge. They fell upon Cadiz in 1596, and did terrible mischief in that great port. They destroyed the Spanish fleet, sacked and burned the town, stormed the fortress, and planted the orange flag of Nassau on the towers of one of Philip's greatest cities. In the next year, 1597, Maurice, with the help of English soldiers, fought a pitched battle with the finest troops of Philip, and drove them before him in headlong rout. This victory filled the Dutch with great joy. It was the first time for many a day that the Spaniards had been broken in the open field.

The patriots once more began to hope. At sea they had beaten the Spaniards again and again, but on land the Spanish soldiery had been invincible. Now Prince Maurice was destroying this dread of Spain, and leading Dutch armies to victory. The next great event was the death of their old enemy, Philip. He died on September 12, 1598, after a long illness, during which he suffered agonies of pain. He was in the seventy-second year of his age and the forty-third of his reign. His whole life as a King had been spent in trying to crush the Protestant faith, and to destroy those who followed it. No one can count the number of people whom he caused to die, many by the most cruel death which a martyr can know. But he felt no remorse for this. He was

Holland

so stubborn in his belief that he had done right that he reproached himself for having been too gentle with heretics, and his dying request to his daughter was that she should maintain the Catholic faith in the Netherlands.

The death of Philip was no check to the war. His son, Philip III., came to the throne, and continued the struggle to subdue the sturdy Hollanders. His first act was to seize every Dutch ship in a Spanish port, and throw the crews into prison. These men were either put to death or sent to toil at the oar as galley-slaves. It may seem strange that Dutch vessels should be in Spanish ports, but up to that time there had been a brisk trade between Holland and Spain, although they had been at war for the last forty years. The truth was that Spain needed the things brought in Dutch ships, and the Dutch rejoiced to make money by traffic with Spain. It was at times a matter of reproach against the Dutch merchants that they carried on this busy trade with their great enemy, even supplying the Spaniards with the gunpowder with which Dutch cities were battered and Dutch troops slain.

Now this profitable trade had come to an end. Was it a blow to Holland? It was not—it was one of the best things that ever happened for the Dutch; for hitherto the latter had obtained the produce of the East Indies from Spain, in whose hands lay the East Indian trade. Now the Dutch were driven abroad to the East, to fetch pepper and spices for themselves, and in the end they worked up a trade a thousand times more profitable than that which they had lost.

About this time ship after ship sailed from the shores of Holland, bound on voyages to discover a way to the East Indies by crossing the Polar seas. At that day,

The Greatness of Holland

and, indeed, until quite recent times, sailors believed in a North-East Passage ; they felt sure that a road could be found to India and China across the Polar regions. Such a road would be safe and easy for Dutch vessels if it could be found, for they would then avoid seas where Spanish and Portuguese enemies lay in wait for them. Attempt after attempt was made, but no vessel could pass the barriers of ice and snow, and the North-East Passage was never made ; the Dutch had to strike south and pass round the Cape of Good Hope to reach the East Indies.

CHAPTER XII

THE GREATNESS OF HOLLAND

THE great days of the Dutch Republic date from the year 1609, when a lull came in the great war, and a twelve years' truce was made with Spain. For the next century the Dutch Republic, the United Provinces, formed one of the Great Powers of Europe. Her sailors won dominion abroad and founded a great colonial empire. Her flag was known and respected in every sea. Her merchants were the most wealthy in the world. Her chief city, Amsterdam, was the largest and richest city in Europe. Holland became the centre of European commerce and European finance.

But there are a few points we must notice in the years just before the great truce. These are the Battle of Nieuport in 1600 ; the siege of Ostend, which began in 1601 ; and the death of Elizabeth in 1603.

The Battle of Nieuport was brought about because the States-General, the rulers of the republic, resolved

Holland

to send an expedition against the Netherland provinces which had submitted to Spain. Their object was to weaken the Archduke Albert, the Spanish Governor, who relied on these provinces for the means of maintaining the war. Maurice, much against his will, was sent with an army against the town of Nieuport in Flanders, and laid siege to it. Maurice was not willing, because he thought the plan was bad and the risk too great; but the States-General, led by John Barneveldt, a man of great influence in their counsels, insisted that the expedition should be made.

Maurice attacked Nieuport, and the Archduke Albert promptly attacked him. So swift was the march of the Spanish army that Maurice was caught in a trap. He found himself amid a waste of sand-hills, with his back to the sea and the Spanish in front of him. The great captain rose to the situation. He sent his ships away, so that the last chance of escape was cut off. Clad in shining armour, with orange plumes in his helmet, an orange scarf across his breastplate, he rode, sword in hand, through the lines of his army. "There is no choice now," said he; "you must conquer the Spaniards or be driven into the sea." The battle began, and the Spaniards, fighting with their accustomed fury, swept all before them. The patriot army broke and fled. It seemed as if the death-blow of the republic had fallen.

But Maurice, with unflinching courage, checked the flight and brought his troops back to the combat. Next he launched his small body of cavalry upon the Spanish infantry. The horsemen charged home and shattered the enemy's ranks. The Spaniards, checked at the moment when they thought that victory was theirs, fell into confusion. Maurice seized the moment to advance, and swept the enemy from the field in hope-

The Greatness of Holland

less rout. A body of English troops under Sir Francis Vere took part in this famous victory.

In the next year the Archduke laid siege to Ostend, the only town of Flanders held by the Republic. It was a long and weary siege, lasting for three years and seventy-seven days. The garrison fought with most obstinate courage, repelling assault after assault. The siege was pressed with equal resolution, and at last the town was surrendered. But it cost Spain a terrible price. More than one hundred thousand Spanish troops fell before its walls, and four million dollars were spent in the struggle.

When Elizabeth of England died in 1603, the Dutch lost a good friend : Elizabeth had found them men and money. It was not easy for her to find the latter, for England in her day was a very poor country, showing no sign that she was to become the wealthiest nation in the world. The Queen of England had her own reasons for helping the United Provinces. Their enemy was her enemy. Spain was the dread of England, as she was the dread of the Netherlands, until the rout of the Great Armada removed that fear from English minds for ever.

After the siege of Ostend the war went on, but there was no great heart in it. The Spaniards had a new commander, the Marquis of Spinola, an Italian who had taken Ostend, and now measured himself against Maurice. But for a time the warfare came to an end, when the twelve years' truce began on April 9, 1609.

By this time the Dutch East India Company was busily at work, and taking into its hands almost the entire trade between Europe and the East Indies. Their ships went to India and the Spice Islands, as the

Holland

islands of Farther India were called, and returned laden with cargoes of rich produce.

Now, to-day, we have so many different kinds of vegetables and fruits at our command that we can hardly understand the wonderful passion which our forefathers had for spices. But it existed, nevertheless, and was a source of great profit to the merchants who were able to supply the demand. The spice-box stood in a place of honour on the tables of the wealthy, and when a guest of high degree was expected, money was laid out without stint to provide an ample store of spice with which he might season his food. A pound of spice was often worth as much as a whole quarter of wheat, and the demand for ginger, cloves, mace, nutmegs, pepper, and cinnamon, was unceasing.

The Spice Islands were at first in the hands of the Portuguese, but the Dutch attacked them and made short work of them, destroying their power in Farther India. When the Dutch had entered the trade, they tried to keep it in their own hands in various ways. They bribed the natives to cut down the spice-bearing trees, except those whose produce came into their own warehouses. They captured and held the five islands on which alone the clove grew. They assailed fiercely the vessels of other traders.

For a time they held complete sway, and they took advantage of this to put what prices they pleased on the spices in their stores. For instance, pepper had



A Dutch Interior—Early Seventeenth Century.

The Greatness of Holland

been sold at about 2s. 8d. per pound ; the Dutch coolly raised the price to 8s. Cloves went up to a higher figure still, for they possessed the Clove Islands, and none could be got save from them. When it is considered that the spices cost very little in the East Indies, and were sold at these great rates in Europe, it is not wonderful that the profits were enormous. So the Dutch thrived mightily until a terrible rival arose—the English East India Company, before which their star paled and waned.

At home the Hollanders took advantage of peace to extend their land and improve it in a hundred ways. They pumped out lakes, built dikes, drained swamps, and turned vast stretches of submerged soil into rich meadow-land. As farmers and gardeners they were far ahead of any other nation of Europe. Their cattle were the finest, their crops were the greatest, to be found. In their gardens were to be gathered



Dutch Costumes—Early Seventeenth Century.

the richest fruits, the most beautiful flowers, and the most excellent vegetables. It was the Dutch who taught people how to obtain fresh meat all the year round, by cultivating root crops, and thus obtaining good winter feed for cattle. In this way they helped to banish leprosy and scurvy, by providing a constant supply of wholesome food. Such was the excellence of their farming, that they could support three times as many people on a given piece of land as could be maintained in other

Holland

countries, and husbandry in England took a great leap forward when our people began to follow Dutch methods.

In other arts of peace Holland took just as foremost a place. As Professor Rogers remarks : "Holland was the printing-house of Europe, for I believe more books were issued by Dutch publishers in the seventeenth century than by all the rest of Europe put together. Holland supplied the world with the most accomplished lawyers, the most painstaking historians, the most skilful physicians, and the most original thinkers in science. There was a prosperous and prolific school of painters in Holland, a most skilful school of engravers, before a single Englishman had attempted either art. The University of Leyden was far more renowned in the seventeenth century than Oxford, Cambridge or Paris were, and students from all countries crowded into this, the youngest of the great Universities. Holland was the origin of modern international law and of modern physic. It was the country from which the best mathematical instruments, the best astronomical instruments, the best nautical instruments, could be procured. It discovered the art of cutting and polishing diamonds, and for centuries Amsterdam possessed a monopoly of this art, if, indeed, it has lost it yet. There was no department of learning or skill in which the Dutch did not excel."

Religious Quarrel and a Renewed War

CHAPTER XIII

A RELIGIOUS QUARREL AND A RENEWED WAR

THE Dutch had fought hard for forty years in a religious war with Spain. They made a truce with their ancient enemy, and spent the time in a bitter religious quarrel among themselves. A dispute arose in Holland between two bodies of Protestants who did not agree upon certain matters of doctrine. The quarrel began between two professors at Leyden—Arminius and Gomarus. Gomarus put forward very severe views in theology, and Arminius remonstrated against them. In consequence his followers became known as Arminians or Remonstrants ; their opponents became the Contra-Remonstrants. In time these differences of opinion caused severe feuds among the people. Both sides indulged in persecution. Where one side was in power its opponents were punished, and great disturbances arose. Ministers preaching unpopular doctrines were driven from their pulpits with brickbats, and assailed with sticks and stones. If a persecuted party attempted to worship in secret, the place was attacked and wrecked, and the worshippers beaten as they fled from their assailants. Finally this struggle split the whole country into two factions.

Upon the one side were the Remonstrants, led by the wealthy burghers and merchants, the ruling party in the republic, the men who held power in the various States of the United Provinces. At their head was the great statesman and leader, John Barneveldt. Barneveldt had spent a long life in the service of his country. He had fought as a volunteer under William the Silent.

Holland

He had taken a foremost part in the long war with Spain. He had gained a position of wide influence and authority. The Contra-Remonstrants were the masses of the people, the ruled as against the rulers, and their leader was to be found in Prince Maurice himself.

Maurice cared little for the points of theology, but he cared a great deal about the political side of the quarrel. Maurice was not unselfish like his father, William the Silent. Had the crown of Holland been offered to him, he would never have refused it. He was Stadtholder, but that was merely Chief Magistrate, and he wished to increase his authority. So he naturally opposed those whose authority was little less than his, and placed himself at the head of the popular party. Matters nearly came to open war, but in the end the Contra-Remonstrants triumphed, and at the Synod of Dort, in 1618, their doctrines were adopted by the Reformed Dutch Church.

Shortly afterwards Barneveldt was seized and thrown into prison. The famous old statesman was brought to trial, and was condemned to death on the score that he had acted in such a manner as to bring the national safety into danger. The truth was that his opponents feared and hated him, and meant to destroy him. He was one of the chief founders of the republic; he had ruled it wisely and well, and done great things for it; he loved his country with all his heart. And now he fell by a shameful death, a victim to religious faction.

Another great Remonstrant whose life was in danger was the famous lawyer and writer, Grotius. But he was sent to a prison instead of the scaffold, and after a time he escaped by means of a clever trick. He was allowed the use of his books in prison, and they were brought to and fro in a large chest. One day the thought struck

Religious Quarrel and a Renewed War

his wife that here was a means of escape. The plan was tried, and proved successful. Grotius got into the chest and was carried out under the very eyes of his keepers, and fled from the country in disguise.

The twelve years' truce expired in August, 1621, and in a short time the war with Spain began once more. The Dutch had now to fight alone; they could expect help neither from France nor from England. The favour of France had been lost by the execution of Barneveldt, and in England Elizabeth was dead, James I. was on the throne, and James had become a close friend of Spain. The Spaniards were full of hope in renewing their attack on the Dutch, for they saw that the United Provinces were spending their strength on quarrels at home instead of facing the foreign enemy. At this time, too, the sage counsels and wise leadership of Barneveldt were greatly missed, and Maurice exclaimed in his rough way: "As long as the old rascal was alive we had counsels and money; now we can find neither the one nor the other."

Maurice himself was soon to leave the stage of his great triumphs. He died in April, 1625, at the age of fifty-eight, leaving behind him a great and famous name in war. He was followed by his brother Frederick Henry, who became Stadtholder, and commander of the Dutch forces. Once again the family of William the Silent furnished a great leader and ruler. Not only was



Dutch Scene—Seventeenth Century.

Holland

Frederick Henry an able general, but he shone as a statesman, and under him the religious strife disappeared and Holland became the most tolerant country in Europe. It became a refuge for those whose race or religion placed them under a ban in other countries, and it was the favourite home of numbers of wealthy Jews, whose riches and enterprise largely helped in forming the commercial greatness of Holland.

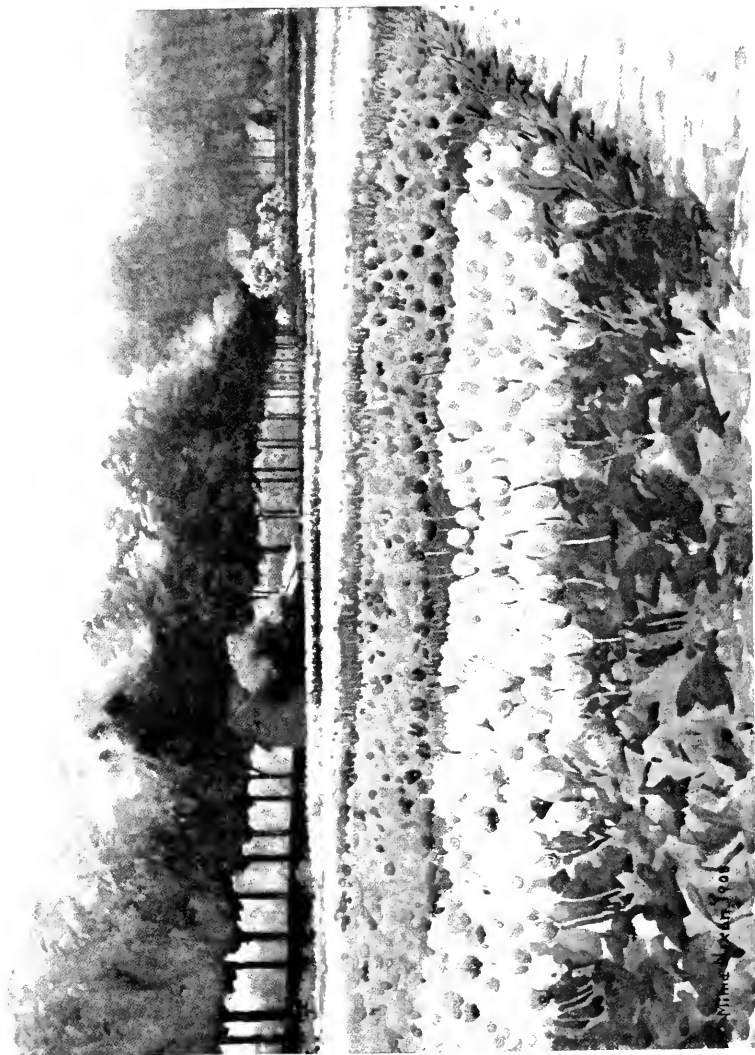
This stage of the war between Holland and Spain was marked by the striking success of the Dutch at sea. They continued their former career of victory, and did dreadful mischief to Spanish ships and navies. In 1628 the Dutch seized the entire silver fleet of the Spaniards, and, as Spain depended upon this treasure to pay her way, it was a severe blow to her finances. Then the ships of Holland sailed for America, and attacked Spain and Portugal in the very ports whence the treasures of the New World were sent. Thus they were making themselves a power both in the West and in the East Indies, and the might of Spain was steadily weakened before them.



Dutch Costume—
circa 1630.

Prince Frederick Henry guided all those enterprises so well that the States-General took a very important step. To show their gratitude, they made his office of Stadtholder hereditary in his family, the House of Orange. They settled the succession of his position upon his son William, then a child five years old. In the end this proved a very unwise step. It brought about a conflict between the States-General and the Stadtholder, which did great harm to Holland.

It was in the time of Frederick Henry that the great



Religious Quarrel and a Renewed War

tulip mania broke out among the Dutch. The whole people seemed to go crazy over the buying and selling and growing of tulip bulbs. The wildest speculations were indulged in. A single bulb of some famous kind changed hands at a cost of hundreds of pounds. "Millions of guilders were staked on these roots, and large fortunes were made and lost in the traffic." And these vast sums were risked on flower bulbs at a time when the country was engaged in a costly war, and when the burden of general taxation was extremely heavy. It was certainly a strange madness to rage among such a people as the Dutch, as a rule so calm and clear-headed.

In 1639, Tromp, the great Dutch Admiral, utterly destroyed a Spanish fleet in a battle fought off the English Downs. After this victory the States-General took the title of High Mightinesses, or high and mighty lords. They believed that a well-sounding title would give them more importance in treating with other powers. In 1641 came an alliance with England. The son of the Stadtholder married the eldest daughter of Charles I., and again the connection between England and Holland, for good or ill, became very close.

Still the Spanish war dragged on and on, nor did it come to a close until 1648, when peace was proclaimed on June 5, the very day on which Egmont and Horn had been executed eighty years before. The war, of course, ended in Spain giving up every claim and title she had preferred to Dutch allegiance. The independence of Holland was fully admitted. It had been absolute for many years, and the admitting of the truth by Spain was a mere formality. The Dutch held all they had won, and their old enemy threw down her sword and retired from the combat for ever.

Holland

Frederick Henry did not see this conclusion of the struggle in which his whole life had been spent. He had already died in March, 1647, and his son William had succeeded him.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DUTCH WARS WITH ENGLAND

WILLIAM did not hold his father's place for long. He died in 1650, at the age of twenty-four, leaving an infant son. Although William had held power for so short a time, he had done much to create ill-feeling towards the House of Orange throughout the country. He wished to seize supreme power, and he did many illegal things to increase his influence and authority. When he died, the State of Holland took the lead among the seven States of the United Provinces, and for a time there was no Stadtholder, his power being exercised by the States-General.

By this time Charles I. had been executed, and England also was a republic. Now disputes arose between the two republics, and war broke out between Holland and England. The reasons were two: disputes over trade, and the help given by Holland to the exiled Stuarts. The sons of Charles I. had fled to their sister in Holland, and had received protection and assistance. The Dutch, too, were very angry with England's famous Navigation Act. This Act forbade any ships to enter English ports unless they brought the products



William II. of
Orange.

The Dutch Wars with England

of their own country. In this way a great blow was struck at the Dutch carrying trade, for the ships of Holland carried goods from every land. The war which followed was a battle of sea-kings. Blake for the English, Tromp for the Dutch, are Admirals whose names and deeds will never be forgotten. In May, 1652, Blake and Tromp fought an indecisive battle, but later in the year Tromp won a victory, and then sailed the Channel with a broom at his masthead as a sign that he had swept the English from the seas.

Early in 1653 Blake turned the tables, and defeated Tromp in a three days' battle off Portland. Again, a two days' battle in June ended in the defeat of Tromp, and now the English hoisted the broom in turn. In August, Tromp fell in a combat where victory again rested with the English, and in despair the Dutch sought peace. They obtained it from Cromwell upon severe terms, one of which was that the House of Orange should not again return to power. This provision was made because the Orange party showed strong favour to the cause of the Stuarts.

The terms were accepted for Holland by John de Witt, a great statesman who had gained a position of high authority in the States-General, and there was peace between England and Holland for a few years. De Witt held the post of Grand Pensionary of Holland, a post which, in the absence of a Stadtholder, made him the chief officer of the State. He was, as we may say, the Prime Minister of Holland, and managed all affairs of State from 1650 to 1672. He had many enemies, but the bitterest of all were the followers of the House of Orange. These were never tired of demanding that the young Prince, the son of William, should be placed in the office of Stadtholder, an office which they de-

Holland

clared to belong to the House of Orange. Now this young Prince is of much interest to us, for in time he grew up to be William III. of Holland and of England.

De Witt took charge of the boy's education and brought him up very carefully, with the aim of rendering him of service to his country. But De Witt did not part with one shred of his own power, and in time this aroused a feeling against him which brought him to a cruel and dreadful death.

Charles II. came to the throne of England in 1660. He did not like the Dutch, although they had aided him and his family, and war between the two countries was renewed. In the beginning there were some fights of small importance, but in 1666 came a great battle of four days, when De Ruyter, the famous Dutch Admiral, overcame Monk, who escaped in a fog. In a short time there was another hard-fought battle, and now the English carried the day. But the English had their worst enemy at home, in a corrupt and faithless King, who wasted on his pleasures the money that should have made good their losses in ships and men. The Dutch renewed the attack in 1667, and found none to oppose them. They sailed in triumph up the Thames, they burned ships in the Medway, and the roar of their cannon was heard with deep shame and anger by the citizens of London. In a short time the war was ended by the Peace of Breda.

In 1668, England, Holland, and Sweden, formed the famous Triple Alliance to check the power of Louis XIV.,



Admiral de Ruyter.

The Dutch Wars with England

King of France. But Louis soon bought over the faithless Charles II. of England, and then launched an attack on the republic. Louis soon overran some of the Dutch provinces, and De Witt sued for peace and offered terms. But Louis, with all the pride of a conqueror, rejected them, and by doing so roused all the stubborn courage of the Dutch nation to oppose him. Prince William had already been made Captain-General of the Dutch forces, for the people clamoured for a leader from their beloved House of Orange; but William was not made Stadtholder, and his power was carefully restricted by De Witt and his friends.

The partisans of the House of Orange were now more bitterly inflamed than ever against John de Witt and his brother Cornelius, an able man who assisted him. An attempt was made to assassinate them. It failed, but upon a false accusation Cornelius was thrown into prison at the Hague. John de Witt went to the prison to visit his brother, and the place was attacked by an Orange mob. The rioters broke open the doors, dragged the brothers into the street, and there they were torn in pieces. This dreadful outrage took place in August, 1672.

Upon the death of the De Witts all power passed into the hands of William III., the young Prince of Orange. He at once led the people to a heroic struggle against Louis of France. Sooner than yield to the French, he declared that he would embark with his people for the East Indies, and drown Holland as his great-grandfather, William the Silent, had once proposed to do. The French advanced, but were soon checked; the Dutch opened the dikes and laid the country under water. At sea the Dutch held their own nobly against the combined navies of England and France.

Holland

William III. proved a splendid man of affairs. He handled matters so well that he soon gained the help of a number of countries against France, whom all feared. Among his helpers was actually Spain, the old enemy, but now converted to a friend through fear of Louis of France. The French were forced to leave Holland, and peace was made with England. There was great joy throughout the United Provinces upon this fortunate turn of affairs ; in their gratitude the States made the office of Stadtholder hereditary in William's family, and thus the House of Orange was placed at the head of the nation once and for all. But William's position, we must remember, was not yet that of a Sovereign ; it was that of First Minister or Chief Magistrate of the republic.

The whole purpose of William's life was to break the power of France. He knew Louis XIV. for a bitter and unsleeping enemy of his country, and William was never weary of forming alliances and planning campaigns intended to weaken the French. As a general he was not successful in winning battles ; he was beaten again and again. But he had a wonderful power of recovery after defeat. The enemy who had dealt William a crushing blow found it unwise to neglect him afterwards : he was on his feet and offering battle once more in a very short time. In the end this stubborn determination wore down his foes more than if he had won several battles.

In 1677 he married Mary, the daughter of the Duke of York, afterwards James II. of England. This marriage is very important, for it led to our country having a Dutch King in the person of William. This came about in 1688, when England dismissed James II. from the throne, and invited William and his wife to rule the land as William III. and Queen Mary.

The Dutch Wars with England

As King of England, William now had greater powers with which to wage his struggle against Louis of France, and years of fierce strife followed until the Peace of Ryswick, in 1697.

It was in this year that the Dutch discovered, to their surprise, that a royal shipwright was working in their midst. They found that Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, was learning to build ships in the little town of Zaandam. He wished to have a fleet, so he had come to Holland in disguise, calling himself Peter Michaelhoff, to study ship-building. He worked for a shipbuilder, and his fellow-workmen, having no idea who he was, called him Piet. The wooden cabin in which he lived is still preserved, and contains some articles which Peter the Great used when he worked as a labourer in a Dutch shipyard.

When William died in 1702, the last great Prince of the House of Orange passed away. He was the fourth of the great Stadtholders who had given fame to their family and their country. In no other land can be found a case of so many splendid soldiers and statesmen springing one after the other from the same stock to lead their countrymen and preserve the liberties of their nation. William III. left no children, and the power he had enjoyed returned to the Grand Pensionary of Holland, who carried on the Dutch government without a Stadtholder.

The war against Louis went on, and Marlborough, at the head of the allies, fought battles which drenched the Netherlands with blood until 1713, when the Peace of Utrecht was made. The Dutch gained but little by this treaty, and they resolved to steer clear in future of wars which brought benefit to other people, but not to themselves.

Holland

CHAPTER XV

THE DECLINE OF HOLLAND

THE eighteenth century saw a steady fall in the power of Holland. For a large part of the period her wealth was as great as ever, her commerce as flourishing ; but it was observed that her old heroic spirit was gone, that her people no longer showed the endurance of their fathers on land or their splendid vigour on sea. There



At Low Tide.

were those who said that wealth had sapped the strength of the nation, and luxury had enfeebled it.

In 1732 the people found themselves face to face with a terrible danger : their old, unsleeping enemy, the sea, threatened to overwhelm them. It was found that vast stretches of the dikes were rotten, and might give way at any moment and permit the ocean to sweep



PETER THE GREAT WORKING AS A
SHIPWRIGHT AT ZAANDAM PAGE 74

The Decline of Holland

over the land. The huge barriers looked as imposing as ever, but it was discovered that the massive beams and piles were mere shells ; they had been eaten into by a sea-worm called the "pholas." The pholas had actually been brought from the East by their own ships, and had settled upon the dikes and was destroying them. This little creature lives in a sharp-edged shell which it uses as a saw, and so cuts out a home for itself in timber or soft stone. Luckily, the Dutch discovered its ravages in good time, and by facing the dikes with a coating of flint and granite were able to defeat the attacks of this tiny but very dangerous enemy.

Many years passed after the death of William III. before a new Stadtholder was chosen from the House of Orange. He was installed in 1747, at a time of great public trouble. The Dutch had been dragged into the fierce war which was raging between Frederick the Great of Prussia and Queen Maria Theresa of Austria and Hungary. Several nations joined in the struggle on one side or the other, but none suffered so much as the Dutch. Their commerce was cruelly damaged, they incurred very heavy debts, the taxation was crushing, and the people became eager for peace. In hope of better times, the authority of the States-General was set upon one side, and the Prince of Orange was put in power as William IV. More than that, it was decreed that the office of Stadtholder should descend in his family, and his power, if not his title, was that of a Sovereign.

From this day Holland remained for some time a republic in name, but it was in name only. The States-General still existed, they still bore the title of High Mightinesses, they still appeared to be the powerful

Holland

magistrates who had ruled the little State and made its name great in Europe ; but their real power had departed, and lay in the hands of the Stadtholder. The Dutch Republic was at an end.

William IV. held office for four years, dying in 1751, and leaving a son three years old. The government of the country was carried on by William's widow, Anne, daughter of George II. of England. Anne ruled badly, for she put the interests of England before those of her son's country, and winked at the enormous damage which British privateers inflicted on Dutch trading vessels during the Seven Years' War. England was at war with France, and Dutch shipping was attacked on the plea that they might be carrying French goods.

The young Prince began to rule in 1766 as William V., but he was of weak character and easily led by those around him. The chief event of his time was the War of American Independence. The Stadtholder was on the English side, but the feeling of the Dutch was naturally for the Americans, since the latter were fighting for liberty, as their own forefathers had done. England, seeing that feeling in Holland was against her, attacked Dutch shipping, and in 1780 Holland joined the alliance known as the "Armed Neutrality," an alliance directed against England. The consequence was that England declared war upon Holland, and this war marks the time when the two countries finally drifted apart, after their histories had been entwined for more than two hundred years.

William V. proved so feeble and worthless a ruler that a strong party was formed against him. This party was known as the "Patriots," and its aim was to restore the old republican authority and revive the

The Decline of Holland

power of the States. The Orange party held firmly by the Stadtholder, and the country was weakened by the quarrels of these powerful groups. The weak and foolish Stadtholder steadily lost all authority and influence among his countrymen, and the Patriots set to work to deprive him of his power as ruler. They took from him his office of Captain-General, and made every effort to crush the House of Orange and its friends.

William V., spurred on by his wife, a Prussian Princess, made an effort to regain his authority in 1787. At the head of the Orange party, he attacked the Patriots and began a civil war. He had the support of his brother-in-law, the King of Prussia, and a Prussian army marched into Holland and seized Amsterdam. The Patriots were completely overthrown, and William, with the help of foreign troops, was triumphant.

Then there came upon Europe the great whirlwind of the French Revolution. Holland was attacked, and the Patriots welcomed the French. William V. fled before the storm, and took refuge in England in 1795, and the Dutch Revolution was effected. Holland now became known as the Batavian Republic. She remained under this title until 1806, when Napoleon turned her into a kingdom, and made his brother, Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland. In 1810 Napoleon took his brother away and joined Holland to France.

Through all these changes the Dutch suffered severely. They were heavily taxed, their commerce was ruined, their colonies were seized by the English, their wealth used for purposes in which they had neither concern nor interest. All this aroused among them a deep hatred of Napoleon; and when he was beaten at Leipzig

Holland

in 1813 Holland rose against him, and the head of its ancient house returned in the person of the Prince of Orange, son of William V.

Upon the fall of Napoleon in 1815, Holland and Belgium were joined to form the kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Prince of Orange became the first ruler, and, as William I., was crowned at Brussels in September, 1815. At the same time Holland recovered most of her colonies.



At Delft.

Recent Times

CHAPTER XVI

RECENT TIMES

THE union of Holland and Belgium proved to be a great mistake. Since the days of Philip the two countries had drifted widely apart. Belgium had been reduced to a condition of obedience to Spain ; Holland had made good its freedom. The Reformed religion had long since died out in Belgium, and she had become Roman Catholic to the core ; it was impossible that two countries so widely differing in character and interest could live comfortably together under one government.

William I. made matters worse. He was a narrow-minded man, and ruled with an eye to Dutch feelings, and had little sympathy with his Belgian subjects. In 1830 the Belgians rose and threw off the Dutch yoke. There was some fighting, but the independence of Belgium was soon assured, and she was given a King of her own, a German Prince, Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. William I. now reigned over Holland alone.

In 1840 William resigned the crown, and was followed by his son, William II. The latter died in 1849, and his eldest son came to the throne as William III. The latter enjoyed a long reign, for he did not die until 1890, leaving a daughter, Wilhelmina, only ten years old. This little girl came to the throne, but

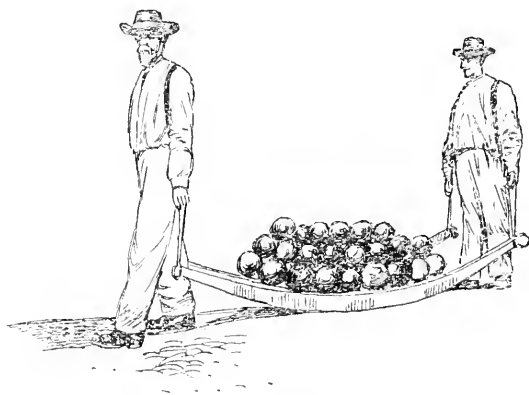


A Milkman.

Holland

until she was old enough to rule, her mother, a German Princess, acted as Regent. But Queen Wilhelmina has long succeeded to full power, and now rules quietly and ably over the Dutch nation. She married a German Prince, and has one daughter, the Princess Juliana.

Under these recent rulers of the House of Orange, since parting from Belgium, the people of Holland have lived that quiet, peaceable existence which calls



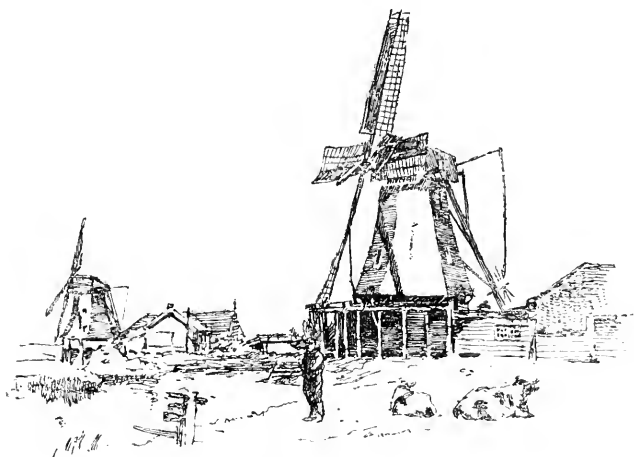
Cheese Porters.

for little mention of historical events. Their greatest happenings have been in home affairs, such as the building of the great ship-canal from Amsterdam to the North Sea, which was completed in 1876. For the rest, Holland may be compared to a great man who has shone both in the council chamber and on the battle-field, but has now put away his sword and retired to the placid enjoyment of tilling his own estate and busying himself with his own affairs. No longer does Holland carry weight as one of the Great Powers of

Recent Times

Europe. No longer do her navies sweep the sea and her armies stand in the forefront of European battle. But, for all that, she has a great and assured place in the history of Europe.

Holland was the cradle of modern liberty. She first of all raised the standard of revolt against that firmly-held idea of the Middle Ages, that the people must be of the same religion as the King, and that the latter



Holland of To-day.

had a right to dragoon his subjects into the form of faith which he professed. Besides teaching the world how to win freedom, she also led the way in many arts and sciences. She taught modern Europe navigation, and was the first to explore unknown seas. Many a discoverer has only rediscovered islands and capes and straits where a Dutch captain had been before him. In commerce and agriculture the Hollanders were for a long time easily the first people in Europe. They

Holland

showed respect for the feelings and the rights of others by making their country an asylum where the oppressed could find shelter and safety.

And though the great days of her history are past, yet the Holland of to-day, in her peaceful retirement, shows all these fine qualities of her forefathers. Her commercial honour, her busy industry, her thrift, good sense, and benevolence, still win the respect of all nations.

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